COMMENTARY

GROUP LIFE WITHIN THE AMERICAN PATTERN

Its Scope and Its Limits

OSCAR HANDLIN

"THESE people associate as easily as they breathe," wrote Fredrika Bremer of the Americans in 1853. After two years of travel in the United States, what seemed most striking and characteristic to the Swedish novelist was the variety and spontaneity of group activity on this side of the Atlantic. There, she sensed, lay a key to the unique qualities of New World democracy.

Up to our own times, this feature of American life has continued to impress the Europeans who have made comparisons with their own uniform and stratified societies. Indeed, there seems, in retrospect, to have been a striking connection between the development of democracy in the United States and the growth in the number and scope of autonomous associations.

Such associations were not here at the start. American history began with the Puritan conception of Commonwealth of the 17th century, the ideal of which was the completely uniform society of the town meeting —one state, one community, one church. But the conditions of colonization exerted a steadily disruptive effect, broke up closely-knit, homogeneous communities. The constant influx of outsiders and the unsettling frontier left this country with a society in which no form of association was completely coterminous with every other. Every man was a stranger to some extent and "belonging" was a relative term. The result was the persistent sprouting of all sorts of religious, cultural, and social groups among which the prospective member had the capacity freely to choose.

Out of enormous diversity grew an exhilarating sense of spontaneity, a taste for experimentation and improvisation, and the urge toward liberty.

Freedom of association then shielded the citizen against the naked exercise of power

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AMERICANS are famous for being "joiners"; every foreign visitor has been astonished at the richness and complexity of group life—religious, ethnic, social, etc.—in America; and the wide range of cultural, social, and political objectives to which these groups turn their energies. Yet there are Americans who feel that in some way these group loyalties and activities might be incompatible with the primary obligation to be a good American citizen. OSCAR HANDLIN here canvasses American historic experience and tries to define the boundaries of the privileges which America has traditionally granted to group activity—what has been regarded as permissible and at what points limits are felt to have been reached. Mr. Handlin is associate professor of social science at Harvard. He is the author of *Boston's Immigrants* (1941), *The Immigrant in American Politics* (1944), *Commonwealth* (1946), and most recently has edited *This Was America,* an anthology of writings by European travelers in this country. Mr. Handlin was born in 1915 and attended Brooklyn College.

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by his government. In the United States, the individual was not compelled alone to confront the state. Between the isolated man and his government stood a wide array of intermediaries. A person was not simply a citizen of the United States, and nothing more. He was also a Mason, an Odd Fellow, or a Tall Cedar of Lebanon; a Catholic, a Methodist, or a Jew; a Yankee or Irishman, a Democrat or Republican. And having these affiliations did not detract from his Americanism. In these groups, he could play a significant role that was free of pressure from the state. Competition among organizations created a situation in which diversity was normal rather than eccentric. It left great areas of social activity—the most important areas—free for the expression of the widest differences.

TODAY this variety of association, so productive of benefits in the past, seems threatened by a sustained assault from many complex and subtle sources. The unsettling mobility of new people in new places has, in some measure, subsided, while fresh forces press for uniformity. The very nature of metropolitan life tends to weaken the family and all the institutions derivative from it. Our role in world affairs has paradoxically generated an intense longing for cultural homogeneity, a longing that imparts an altogether new, exclusive connotation to nationalism. Fear, in a period of hazardous changes, gives rise to the reluctance to tolerate dissent. The media of mass communication assume forms which leave no room for the self-expression of small groups; compare the necessary audience of radio and movie with the twenty-thousand circulation of the very largest dailies a hundred years ago. All these developments place a premium on conformity, encourage the conception of an assimilating society that digests and obliterates the separate accents of distinctive groups in every aspect of social life.

What is most troubling in such sappings of the old structure of American institutional life is the effect upon the status of the individual in our society. For these trends coincide with mounting pressure by the state upon its citizens. Today the activities of the polity enter into every area of social existence. No man, in birth, marriage, or death, in education or the search for a livelihood, escapes its oversight and control. Whether this ubiquitous concern of government with the affairs of those governed be beneficent or not, it certainly alters the role of the individual in society.

For the state, particularly the democratic state, regards its members not as members of groups but as isolated, anonymous entities. Precisely to the extent that it abstains from granting privileges, from making distinctions, from recognizing inequalities in law or differences in status, it also assumes that its citizens are equal and alike. The whole tendency of government action is thus to create uniformity; and that tendency is immensely fortified by the fact that the state has now at its disposal the instruments of mass communication with their own intrinsic inclination to homogeneity. It is very likely, therefore, that the impulse toward conformity which seemed, for a time, a war phenomenon may instead be the outcome of deeper, more permanent trends.

In the totalitarian society, the issue is clear-cut: everything the state does is hostile to the individual, who must resist to preserve his elementary human dignity. But our society still cherishes the nonconformist, still recognizes the right to be different, indeed insists that there is a high social value to diversity. Furthermore, in a democracy the state that threatens to crush the individual is also the instrument of his preservation, and in many areas is alone capable of furnishing services that enhance his human dignity.

The problem of man in a democracy is therefore one of setting limits, of resisting encroachments upon the free personality without weakening the capacity of the state to act constructively on behalf of its citizens. Undoubtedly the extent to which associations independent of the state continue to have vitality in American life will play a part in setting the limits and determining the scope of state action.

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These fundamental developments will, among other things, determine the fate of the ethnic group, a group which discovers its identity and maintains its coherence on the basis of the inheritance of a common culture. Such groups have played an important part in our past, and an evaluation of that part may illuminate their future.

Understanding of the ethnic group has been distorted by the fact that it has most often been studied in its pathological features, in its relations to prejudice and discrimination. Some scholars indeed regard these groups as altogether the products of prejudice and having no existence except as a response to fear. Arnold and Caroline Rose thus argue in *America Divided*: "Certain groups . . . are hated by most other people, and we . . . label them 'minorities.'"

The use of the term "minority" in this context is itself misleading. The word was inappropriately borrowed from the discussions of European nationalism in the period of the First World War. But one could speak of a Ukrainian minority in Poland because one could point to a definable majority of Poles. In the United States, there is no ethnic majority. How can one properly speak of minorities?

Once we erase the implications of the term "minority," it becomes clear that, while some ethnic groups are discriminated against, there is no necessary connection between prejudice and the existence of the ethnic group. Groups which are now subjected to prejudice were not always in that position. Some existed and led full lives as groups for long periods before the onset of prejudice. There were, for instance, no significant manifestations of anti-Semitism in the United States before 1870, perhaps not really before 1910. Yet even by the earlier date, the whole range of communal institutions, the ways of communal action, the sense of identity as an ethnic group, were already strong.

The case of the Italians in America was similar. Virulent feelings of hostility toward these people developed and occasionally broke out in violent mob action in the quarter-century after 1880. But until that time the group flourished and enjoyed a rather high social status. Such illustrations demonstrate that the awareness of group identity is not simply a response to prejudice but rather arises from other reasons independent of it.

The same conclusion emerges from the history of other ethnic groups that have outlived the prejudice once directed against them. The Quakers, at one time bitterly persecuted in America, by the 18th century had been fully accepted and were highly regarded. Yet they continued to act as an ethnic group. They avoided marriage outside their own group; distinctive religious and cultural forms, even distinctive manners of dress, separated them from their neighbors; and they showed a striking degree of economic stratification. Furthermore, the Quakers did not hesitate to take a stand as a group on controversial social and political issues. In many parts of the country, these features of Quaker life still persist. But they do not seem to evoke, do not seem at all related to, prejudice, even in periods of war when Quaker pacifism leaves this group particularly vulnerable as a target. Clearly it is not prejudice that holds the Quakers together but some positive common tie.

Some groups have long retained their identity without having had any experience of prejudice. Thus as New England's Yankees spread through America in the 19th century, they behaved very much like immigrants from abroad: wherever they went, they formed their own churches, their own political associations, and such spontaneous organizations as the New England Societies that played significant social roles until quite recently.

As a matter of fact it would appear that some small ethnic groups, far from being subjected to prejudice, actually occupied favored positions in their communities—for instance, the "Brahmins" in Boston and the Dutch in early 19th-century New York. The relationship of the ethnic group to prejudice could take any one of a number of forms or not exist at all. There was no necessary connection.

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THE activities of ethnic groups, as of other associations, have however occasionally become the objects of hostile movements of some intensity. The history of the United States is dotted with eras of inter-group tensions, eras marked by the growth of intolerance, by sporadic disorders, and by discriminatory political action. But it is significant that these movements did not, until our own times, question the right of the group to exist or to act; they objected rather to some trespass, real or fancied, that seemed to go beyond the legitimate bounds of group action.

The most prevalent objection has been to any kind of secrecy. The suspicion that beneath an innocent surface was a sinister purpose cloaked by secrecy has always aroused violent distrust among Americans. This was true with regard not only to groups of immigrants, but also to associations of the native born. It accounts, in part, for the early hostility to labor unions. It also accounts for the bitter campaign a hundred and fifty years ago against the eminently respectable Society of the Cincinnati. And, after 1828, it produced a decade of merciless political warfare against the Masonic societies. Underlying all these movements was the conviction that legitimate associational activities could be carried on in the public gaze, that secrecy was *prima facie* evidence of illegitimate intent.

A second common objection has been to foreign ties that carried the imputation of disloyalty. Americans for generations judged that there was an inherent contradiction between the principles of their society and those of the societies of Europe, and they were always vigilant lest the Old World somehow attack the New. Groups of any kind, the first loyalty of which lay across the Atlantic, by that fact alone became the objects of distrust. This was the source of the attacks upon the Jacobin societies of the 1790's. More generally, it has been at the root of the recurrent tides of anti-Catholic sentiment in the past century. The center of the Ku Klux Klan movement in the 1920's was in the same districts of the Middle West that had been instrumental in rejecting the League of Nations and that became the core of isolationism in the 1930's. Fear of possible treachery also accounts for the paradoxical simultaneous attacks on the Wall Street Bankers and the Socialist Reds, alike tainted by European connections.

Allied to objections to the secret and the "foreign," was the objection to any form of extra-legal coercion. While the effort to prohibit by law associations that depended upon binding oaths was not successful, they were persistently distrusted. Some of the fear of the Roman Catholic Church also derived from lurid suspicions as to the function of confession and the nature of the discipline that bound its clergy. These fears rested on the assumption that associations ought to hold together simply by the will of their members without the support of any form of sanction.

Finally, against ethnic as against other groups, was directed the suspicion of exclusiveness or special privilege. There was a dislike of any imputation that some individuals, by being situated in a favored group, escaped some of the burdens or enjoyed more of the privileges of Americans.

These various grounds of objection form a consistent pattern that limits ethnic group action. Resentment aims at the aspects of conspiracy, of unacknowledged objectives which may not be compatible with those of the whole society. Fear rises at the thought of an *imperium in imperio*, a government within a government, using hidden means of its own for coercion. Hostility is directed at the Pope, at the Elders of Zion, at the International Reds who would subvert the principles of free society in the United States.

The delimitation of these objections reveals, however, that there is an area of free association within which groups may act as such. If the individual retains his freedom of access and resignation, if the aims and actions of the group are open and aboveboard, it has a recognized place in American life, a recognized function to serve.

THE existence of the ethnic group is then not a pathological response to prejudice,

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but the reaction of men of diverse cultural origins to a free society that encouraged their diversity. The characteristic attributes of the ethnic group and its function in society must be considered from that point of view.

Membership in the ethnic group comes through the family by which the group's culture is transmitted. There is, therefore, in all these groups a strong sense of family feeling, concern with ancestry and traditional inheritance. In the fact that each generation brings up its children under similar conditions is the source of the community of culture and ideology that distinguishes these groups. The influence of upbringing also accounts for a certain amount of occupational stratification. Sons have an advantage in following the callings of their fathers, and, with regard to occupational preferences, tend to absorb the values of their surroundings. To the extent that these values are common to the whole group, there is an inclination to concentrate in certain occupations.

Familial ties and common cultural, economic, social, and intellectual attitudes, lead the group into a wide array of associational activities which express its awareness of its own identity. The variety of sects that is characteristic of American religion springs from such ethnic roots rather than from theological differences. A sense of inner responsibility for the group has produced innumerable charitable institutions. Like traditions give rise to cultural associations, and the desire for comradeship leads to purely social and fraternal societies.

Common ideology and common interests sometimes encourage concerted political action as well. Most usually the group is moved to exert itself in matters of particular moment to its own members. But the ethnic group has by no means confined itself to such matters; often its most significant activity has been in areas of very general concern. Thus New Englanders in the last half of the 19th century were responsible for the agitation of the prohibition issue in the Middle West, and a German political convention in the heart of Texas did not hesitate, shortly before the Civil War, to proclaim slavery an evil and to demand its immediate abolition.

Ethnic institutions, once organized, acquire a vitality of their own and tend to attach members in some degree of closeness to the ethnic group. Since such associations are also a selective element in determining the contacts and limiting the acquaintances of the members of the group, they produce a tendency toward endogamy, not because of any abstract attitudes toward intermarriage, but because marriages are likely to be most numerous where the highest rate of contact exists.

In the past, these ethnic groupings have served a significant function. They have eased the situation of great masses of men and have helped them adjust to the violent changes of our society in the last hundred years. *Vereine* of immigrants and hereditary societies of New Englanders alike provided a milieu in which individuals, in some of their actions, were relieved of the necessity of getting on with strangers. Such groups set up little islands of security in which the like-minded could find relief from the ceaseless tension of the surrounding world. The existence of these islands of security reduced the frequency of trouble-breeding contacts with strangers and made it possible to have diversity without disrupting the social fabric, to have unity without imposing an artificial uniformity. It was this that Fredrika Bremer had in mind when she noted: "Free association is evidently an organizing and conservative principle of life, called forth to give law and centralization to the floating atoms, to the disintegrated elements. The United States thus provides at the same time for the highest development of the individual and of the community at large."

The absence of a full institutional life among ethnic groups not free to develop their own associations seriously impeded their adjustment. The Negroes were distinctive in this respect. The relics of their slave status, combined with the romantic assumption of the abolitionists that there were no real

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differences between the Negroes and other Americans, long deprived this group of the opportunity to build a life of its own. The failure to distinguish between uniformity and equality left it with a truncated social experience. The Negroes confronted an unreal alternative between complete segregation, on the one hand, and participation, usually at an inferior status, in "white" activities. It is significant that the autonomous churches which developed spontaneously from within the group provided until recently the most genuine media of social action for the great mass of American Negroes.

THE problem of the role of ethnic groups was small in our consciousness until the 1930's because the stream of immigration until then automatically kept redefining their nature. The end of immigration has complicated the situation. Americans have not in these two decades grown less varied, but the source of their diversity is no longer the addition of large numbers of overseas newcomers. Differences are now more likely to spring from internal sources, from the recollection of dissimilar religious and cultural experiences, for instance. That is why so many Americans now face the problem of explaining to themselves the quality of their ethnic allegiances.

Certain general factors are already apparent. Not all ethnic groups cover the same ground. Some are far more inclusive in the range of their associational activities than others. Whether a group will support its own press, its own schools, churches, and hospitals, depends on the breadth of the meaningful differences it wishes to maintain. There is no reason why that breadth should be the same for all groups.

Furthermore, we are likely to see considerable fluidity in the structure of these groups in the future. With the disappearance of the most visible sources of identification—accent, name, manners—the strength of compulsory allegiances will wane. Few men will by reason of any overt marks find themselves forced into a group against their wills. In the future, identification with the ethnic group, even in the case of the Negroes, is far more likely to be voluntary, to represent the conscious recognition of the strength of some cultural ties.

Finally, it is likely that in the future individuals may often recognize affiliations with more than one ethnic group. In the 19th century, for example, there were immigrants who participated in both Jewish and German societies, who felt a closeness to both traditions. But often the claim to such multiple allegiances was merely the prerogative of politicians who searched their genealogies for vote-getting grandmothers. Now, however, a rising rate of intermarriage will undoubtedly make that kind of affiliation more common.

THESE changes may alter some aspects of the behavior of the ethnic group. But they are not likely to diminish its vitality or to curtail its associational activities. In man's present situation this is one of the surviving signs of his individuality, of his significance as a person. Here he may find the affirmation that he is not simply the anonymous citizen, a serial number on a dog tag or social security card, but the son of parents, with roots in the past, with a meaning larger than his own life. The islands of security the group can provide may in that sense be more necessary now than ever.

The variety and vitality of associational activity after 1900 distressed the advocates of a narrow one hundred per cent Americanism. Yet, granted the diversity of the American people, it was senseless to expect that they should all be served in the same way. Those who objected to "ghettos" in American life, who demanded thorough assimilation, ultimately, therefore, became advocates of immigration restriction and went along the racist road of the Klan and its successors.

We have seen the terminus of that road in the *Gleichschaltung* of the totalitarian state. Having rejected that, we must accept the consequences of its alternative. As long as the individual retains the right to be different, he will follow the inclinations of his

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upbringing and find attractive the society of those like himself. Variety of association will continue to reflect variety of people.

Does this analysis apply to the Jews? Substantial groups of American Jews deny its relevance to their own experience. From two disparate sources come earnest objections that the Jews are not an ethnic group. Those who think of themselves as members of a religious community with interests confined to creedal matters will complain that the Jews are not so much as an ethnic group. Those who think of themselves as members of a national entity of some sort will complain that the Jews are not so little as an ethnic group. Both objections reveal an unwillingness to look at the substance of Jewish existence in the United States.

The insistence that the Jews constitute simply a religious sect is unrealistic in view of the fact that the organized aspects of all religious life in America revolve about an ethnic rather than a dogmatic axis. The most significant differentiation among Christians in the United States is that between Protestant and Catholics. Yet Unitarians and Episcopalians are both counted Protestants and find themselves closely linked in the social life of their communities, not because they are theologically closer to each other than they are to the Roman Catholics, but because they number the same kind of people among their communicants, because they share a wide common culture, and because their children frequently intermarry.

The same judgment may be made of the Jews. It would be futile to seek among them any creedal common denominator. Many Jews are identified as such with no reference to their religious beliefs and many Jewish activities have no religious focus at all.

The nationalistic conception rests on the argument of uniqueness: the experience of the Jews in the United States, it is urged, has not been like that of other groups. Significantly, that very claim is characteristic of all ethnic groups; each is proud of its uniqueness. No two groups, of course, are the same; in that sense each is unique. But the social experience of the Jews in America has run the same essential course as that of other ethnic groups; the development of religion, of fraternal, charitable, and cultural life, even of nationalistic movements, demonstrates that.

The claim to uniqueness is invalid. It is also dangerous. For it is, in reverse, the charge of the American anti-Semite. Only those Jews who regard their life in America as temporary and conditional can seriously continue to put it forth. It would seem that the only basis on which the Jews may continue to lead their lives as a group and still partake of the life of American society as a whole is, as it was in the past, as one among the many ethnic groups of which our society is compounded.

In these terms, there is ample room for group activity wherever common interests dictate. Jews will in the future, as they and others have in the past, follow the inclination of their culture, tradition, and training in religion, in social action, and in politics. So long as their activities, in any sphere, do not bear the aspects of compulsion or conspiracy, other Americans will see in them only the continuation of a traditional means of American expression.

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DID F.D.R. ESCAPE WILSON'S FAILURE?

Idealism vs. Power Politics in American Foreign Policy

RICHARD H. S. CROSSMAN

GREAT men are an encumbrance as well as an inspiration to the nations and the parties they lead. British Conservatism can ill dispense with Winston Churchill, but his continued leadership prevents the younger Tory politicians from working out their own ideas, and too often diverts the party from its natural line of advance. Similarly, it may be contended, Franklin D. Roosevelt in an even more remarkable way still dominates American politics five years after his death, and, in particular, frustrates the development of American liberalism. To assess his life's work is not merely the erudite pursuit of the academic historian, but a task to be undertaken by anyone concerned to restate the principles either of American foreign policy or of the progressive movement. For the Roosevelt myth—and the raging controversy among those who claim to be his heirs—is proving even more inhibiting than a live and kicking Winston Churchill.

Is it true that, with a few more years of active life, Roosevelt could have achieved the ends of his foreign policy and fashioned a world of harmonious Big Three cooperation; or did his death come after he had unwittingly betrayed the freedoms he had so brilliantly enunciated? Did he will the right end but use the wrong means and the wrong men to accomplish it; or was there, implicit in the end itself, a fatal surrender of moral principle and deviation from the American tradition? Was the world New Deal which he envisaged a tacit capitulation to old-fashioned power politics; or does it remain today the goal, however remote, of democratic statesmanship? Even when all the documents have been studied, there will be no final answer to these questions; for they involve judgments of value which transcend mere assessment of facts. But if American foreign policy and, in particular, Anglo-American relations, are to be firmly based, some answer, however provisional, must be given by each one of us. We cannot evade Roosevelt. Even from his grave, he challenges us to understand him, if we are to understand ourselves.

FORTUNATELY the task has been rendered easier by the researches of Robert E. Sherwood. Biography, especially when written by a friend, is usually ephemeral—at best a source-book for the historian. But *Roosevelt and Hopkins* is much more than a biography; it is a portrait, or a set of portraits, which contains, as great portraits always do, a judgment. It has depth, because the author has achieved distance from his subject without foregoing intimacy, and objectivity without loss of personal loyalty. Throughout its length we see the world from inside the White House. There is only one perspective, but we are given that one perspective steadily and without distortion. Here is the truth, as Roosevelt and Hopkins saw it—and a little more than this subjective truth, because Mr. Sherwood portrays them

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TODAY, motivated less by the disinterestedness of historical judgment than by the urgent necessities of realistic decisions in the world arena, many are subjecting the foreign policy of Franklin D. Roosevelt to intensive appraisal. RICHARD H. S. CROSSMAN here examines Roosevelt's politics through the longer perspectives afforded by the contrast between FDR's approach and method and Woodrow Wilson's "idealism"—and comes to some unusual conclusions. Mr. Crossman is a member of Parliament and one of England's most distinguished journalists. He is on the editorial board of *New Statesman and Nation* and is the author of several books, as well as numerous magazine articles. Mr. Crossman was born in England in 1907.

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as figures in a Greek tragedy. Reading it, we feel—"It could not have been otherwise. These men being what they were, and the circumstances being what they were, it was bound to happen this way—and the failure was not unworthy of them."

Woodrow Wilson was not so fortunate in his biographers. Colonel House was an intriguer and an egotist; and Ray Stannard Baker, though studious and devoted, had neither the dramatic art nor the detachment to transform a chronicle of painful events into tragedy. Yet the most fruitful way to achieve an answer to some of our questions about Roosevelt is undoubtedly to set his story against that of Woodrow Wilson. Both are tragic figures, though one died before the last act had been written. Both were driven by history into wars which deflected them from their original political goals. Both, after their deaths, were extravagantly praised and reviled. But Roosevelt succeeded where Wilson failed. Or so it was said until lately. Now we are beginning to see how deeply Roosevelt failed; and, indeed, I believe that the main reason for Roosevelt's failure lies precisely in his strenuous effort to avoid Wilsonism. One of the most valuable features of Mr. Sherwood's study is that it discloses how deeply Roosevelt was influenced by the ghost of Woodrow Wilson. "That way," Roosevelt seems to have said to himself, "that way lies certain failure."

THE first and most obvious instance of this determination to avoid Wilson's "mistakes" is to be found in Roosevelt's policy towards Germany. In a recent debate in the House of Commons, Mr. Bevin and Mr. Churchill fell into a quite irrelevant discussion about the origins of the slogan "unconditional surrender." Mr. Bevin asserted that he and the rest of the Cabinet had not been consulted, and Mr. Churchill retorted that "unconditional surrender" was an impromptu invention of his friend the President. But Mr. Sherwood had disposed of Mr. Churchill's version before it was formulated. "Unconditional surrender," he demonstrated, was a considered policy, and not a phrase invented off the cuff. As for Mr. Bevin's alibi, if the British Cabinet really had no knowledge of it, at least the chiefs of staff were not in ignorance, since they composed a paper on it before the Casablanca Conference.

The immediate cause for its adoption by Roosevelt and Churchill was, of course, the domestic repercussions in Britain and America of the Darlan affair. Preparing for the invasion of Sicily, and having already received overtures of surrender from Marshal Badoglio, the President and the Prime Minister were anxious at all costs to avoid a second appearance of Fascist appeasement. At Casablanca it was already known that Italy desired to change sides, but it was decided that she should be forbidden to do so until after an unconditional surrender. As a result, we fought a long and costly campaign, and accepted Badoglio and Victor Emmanuel as allies after all! But beyond the immediate problem of Italy loomed Germany. Already in 1942, Russian policy to Germany was becoming two-faced. Stalin was determined to smash the Germans, and yet always to leave a chink open for a German-Russian understanding. Fear that the Russians might make a separate peace was another reason for formulating "unconditional surrender," just as it was the main cause for our refusal later to do business with the conspirators of July 20, 1944. If we could conspire against Hitler, it was thought, so could the Russians.

But beyond all these reasons of expediency in Roosevelt's mind lay the shadow of Woodrow Wilson. His Fourteen Points had been not only the classic statement of liberal principles, but a brilliant piece of political warfare, designed to counter Trotsky's Bolshevik propaganda phrase, "peace without annexations." The Fourteen Points undoubtedly contributed to Germany's moral collapse in the autumn of 1918. But had they proved the basis of a sound peace? Was it true that the German people, freed from Kaiserism, had purged themselves of aggressive instincts? Were self-determination and political democracy sufficient guarantors of peace;

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or was it not wiser (as one cynic remarked), instead of seeking to make the world safe for democracy, to make it safe for the great democracies? Had open covenants openly arrived at proved more effective than secret diplomacy? When there were so many other cogent reasons of expediency for demanding unconditional surrender, the mere asking of these questions was sufficient to decide the issue. And once it had been discovered that the public reaction in Britain and America was surprisingly favorable, the decision became irrevocable policy.

IT WAS a decision whose consequences went far beyond the German problem. Previous European wars had been fought with limited means and for limited objectives. The aim had been not to destroy your opponent or to eradicate his philosophy, but to impose certain terms upon him and to obtain certain concrete advantages for yourself. Wilson's Fourteen Points in the West, and Trotsky's propaganda in the East, were the beginning of modern ideological warfare. But Wilsonism still retained limited objectives. It laid down conditions on which the German people could end the war. Unconditional surrender, on the other hand, was a total demand, which inevitably produced total resistance. By refusing to state the conditions of peace, Roosevelt and Churchill made it impossible for Germany to surrender. It was only possible for Italy because, in this case, they were ready to negotiate the terms of unconditional surrender!

Did Roosevelt appreciate all this at Casablanca? I fancy the answer must be "yes." On numerous occasions later on, he was urgently asked to modify the doctrine: he always refused. Indeed, at Quebec, in September 1944, he developed it still further in the Morgenthau Plan. Now the aim was clearly defined as the total destruction of the enemy nation's effective power; and at Teheran and Yalta he consented to plans for creating a new Poland, which expressly included the expulsion of millions of Germans from their ancestral homes, as a compensation for giving to the Russians those parts of Poland which they had obtained already under the Stalin-Hitler Pact. The repudiation of Wilsonism could go no further.

The idea of unconditional surrender, moreover, was strictly in line with Roosevelt's ideas for the reconstruction of the postwar world. According to Mr. Sherwood, as late as 1943 Roosevelt conceived of a world ruled by the Big Three, with all colonies under international trusteeship, and countries such as France treated as small powers and therefore disarmed. In 1942 he had said: "I like to think that the history of the Philippine Islands in the last 44 years provides in a very real sense a pattern for the future of other small nations and peoples of the world. It is a pattern of what men of good will look forward to in the future." And Mr. Sherwood comments: "In this statement Roosevelt was underscoring the differences between himself and his respected friend Winston Churchill on the extension of the principles of the Atlantic Charter to such areas as Burma, Malaya, the Netherlands East Indies and Indo-China."

Roosevelt seems to have believed that the era of European nation states was over. He disliked De Gaulle not only for his personal unreliability, but as the symbol of a renascent France, which would not permit itself to become the disarmed protectorate of the Anglo-Saxon powers. He strove with Churchill because the British Prime Minister made it clear enough that he would not permit the British Empire to be managed by international trusteeship. Woodrow Wilson had seen the basis of a just peace in the breaking up of the great Austro-Hungarian Empire into smaller areas of national self-determination. The result had been not peace, but the creation of a vacuum in Central Europe which gave Hitler his chance of aggression. Transferring this lesson from European to world politics, Roosevelt envisaged a world in which the reality of Great Power domination should be legitimized. Instead of seeking to destroy power politics and to break up concentrations of national power, he decided that military

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power must and should be concentrated in the fewest possible hands. From a strategic point of view, the world was to be divided into two blocs, an Anglo-Saxon and a Russian bloc, each with its group of satellite states; and the two blocs were to cooperate in running disputed areas, such as Germany and the colonial territories, including China. At San Francisco, this plan was given the sanction of international law in the Charter of the United Nations. As Dr. Evatt was quick to point out at the time, the Charter put the Big Three above the law altogether, and sanctified, in the veto, the theory that a Great Power can do no wrong.

As a prophecy of the course which history was going to take, Roosevelt's repudiation of Wilsonism has certainly justified itself. Five years after his death, the world is divided into an English-speaking and a Communist union, each with its sphere of influence. All that is lacking is the Three Power cooperation which Roosevelt foresaw as the only alternative to the third world war. But is it not already clear that, outside of Russia, no country, including the United States, is prepared to accept this situation as the basis for a just peace? Stalin, of course, welcomed it enthusiastically from the first. Russia's conflicts have always been with Britain, not with America, and the British Commonwealth was then, as it is now, his Enemy Number One. Deeply respectful of Americanism, and aware that Russia and America would be the only two states capable either of atomic self-sufficiency or of waging war from their own resources, he saw, in Roosevelt's concept of the Concert of the Big Powers, tremendous possibilities. If the Concert were achieved, Communist Russia would have a generation of peace in which to grow strong. And if it were not, Roosevelt's proposals would at least provide the opportunity for playing America off against Britain.

It was the second alternative that actually happened. Directly any attempt was made to give concrete form to Roosevelt's ideas of Big Three control, they proved unworkable. France would not submit to being treated as a protectorate, nor would Britain surrender her colonies. Moreover, American public opinion refused to see Poland as the Philippines of the Soviet Union. When these practical difficulties began to emerge, Roosevelt tried the tactics that had proved so successful in American domestic politics. He drew in his horns. Let the big idea remain as the basis of cooperation, and let consideration of the details be postponed till after victory. It was at this point that Stalin began to see the difficulties of negotiating with Roosevelt and Hopkins. In dealing with them, there were no fixed points. What once seemed like principles were suddenly discarded or transformed into their opposite, under the pressure of that maddening American pretext, public opinion. This had been the experience of every convinced New Dealer in dealing with the President before the war. But a World New Deal could not be handled in the same way. When the war stopped a few months after Roosevelt's death, it was found that the cooperation of Teheran and Yalta had evaporated into thin air.

What had then appeared as precise agreements were found to be only the aura of Roosevelt's personality. Mr. Sherwood writes: "At Yalta, Roosevelt was adhering to the basic formula of unconditional surrender; beyond that, he demanded only—to quote one of his favorite phrases—'freedom of action'. . . . I believe it can be proved that he made no commitment on any policy concerned with the post-war treatment of Germany except on the matter of Allied military occupation and the principle of trial and punishment for the war criminals."

That was exactly the trouble. By avoiding all commitments and preventing Britain from making any, Roosevelt left the Western powers, after his death, completely without a policy. Nothing was agreed between Churchill and Truman when the Potsdam Conference met, except the vague ideas of smashing German and Japanese militarism, cooperating with Russia, and preventing the ambitions of second-class

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powers from causing rifts between East and West.

With a superb generosity of spirit, Roosevelt and Hopkins had believed that Russian suspicions could be overcome only by an act of will on the part of the Western democracies. Unfortunately, generosity is a quality which Communists do not appreciate. Stalin only saw the opportunity for playing off Roosevelt against Churchill, and he relied on the revival of American isolationism, which he knew to be Roosevelt's obsession, to produce in due course the power vacuum which Communism would fill. Meanwhile he naturally welcomed a cooperation that made no specific demands on the Soviet Union.

What was needed at Yalta and Teheran to create the possibility of a genuine Three Power unity was a tenacious and precise definition by Roosevelt of America's requirements in Europe, and the commitment of the United States to limited but specific intervention. What Roosevelt provided was a vague ideal of the Concert of the Great Powers, whose only substance was his own tremendous optimism and faith.

IT HAS for long been the fashion to decry Woodrow Wilson as a pedant whose rigid attachment to principles and formulas made a bi-partisan American policy impossible, and destroyed the possibilities of a peace based on the realities, as Clemenceau and Lloyd George understood them. Twenty-five years later, Roosevelt decided to base peace not on principles but on the realities of power. No European or Russian should complain this time that the American President was inhibited either by an academic puritanism or by an adolescent American idealism. This time, an American statesman, versed in every art and subtlety of politics, a man of high moral principle but with no fixed standard of judgment on international affairs, was ready to consider almost any "accommodation," and ruthlessly to suppress principle when it conflicted with military expediency.

One of the enduring values of Anglo-Saxon democracy is that we do not for long tolerate policies which disregard morality and base themselves exclusively on interest and power. In the event, unconditional surrender and the Morgenthau Plan were proved to be infinitely more unrealistic than Wilson's Fourteen Points, because they came into conflict with the puritan conscience and the sense of decency which still dominate public opinion in both our countries. A Russian Communist can carry out upon the fallen enemy a ruthless policy of ideological "re-education" and spoliation. Democracies may, in the heat of war, believe they will do the same. But very soon they find that they cannot. The main result of Roosevelt's anti-German policy has been a swing of the pendulum so violent that many Americans today regard the Germans as more reliable allies than the French.

So too, Roosevelt's Concert of the Great Powers, over-riding the rights of lesser nations, was bound to collapse, not merely because the lesser nations would resist it, but because his own countrymen were unwilling to assume to themselves the imperial responsibilities of a world dictator. And, most ironical of all, it was precisely the political elasticity on which he prided himself which was the President's undoing in his dealings with the Russians. The Communists may be machiavellian, but they are not unprincipled; their policies are power-political, but they are firmly rooted in Bolshevik dogma. Personal magnetism and mental agility, which could achieve wonders during the period of the New Deal, were worth precisely nothing at Teheran and Yalta. What was needed there was an American representative who would cling closely to democratic dogma, and base his negotiations on simple and unchallengeable principles, a statesman who would refuse either to buy Russia's entry into the war against Japan by means of a secret covenant, or to consent to a Polish-German settlement rooted in injustice. There can be little doubt that Woodrow Wilson would have been a far more formidable adversary for Stalin than FDR. He would have known, before he entered the Conference, what he was going

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to fight for. In a real battle of wills—and negotiation with Communists is nothing more or less than this—victory goes not to the swift or the skilful, but to the man of ideals, however narrow his outlook.

It is, of course, true that in the twenty-five years between the death of Wilson and the Yalta Conference, the conditions of war-making and peace-making have changed. War has become infinitely more total and, in peace, power has been concentrated into fewer hands in fewer countries. Roosevelt's perception of this change was extremely acute. The trouble was that his principles were corrupted by this perception. For democratic statesmanship consists not in accepting the realities of power politics as inevitable, but in conforming them to the principles of freedom and the aspirations of the common man. Modern war is total. But does this justify us in waging it like a totalitarian, and transforming peace—to pervert Clausewitz's famous dictum—into a continuation of war by other means? The real democratic leader is the man who refuses to be carried along by the tide of scientific development either into an arrogant contempt for the principles he used to believe in, or into the use of means which destroy the end of democracy itself.

Judged by this standard, Woodrow Wilson failed because the means he employed were insufficient for the end which he splendidly envisaged, despite every temptation; Roosevelt, because the means he so adroitly used destroyed his vision of the end itself. If we study the legacy which both men left, we must surely reach the conclusion that we might have been nearer peace today if America had held fast to the Wilsonian puritanism which Roosevelt was so determined to disown.

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MEDITATIONS
ON THE FALL AND WINTER HOLIDAYS

CHARLES REZNIKOFF

I
New Year's

The solid houses in the mist
are thin as tissue paper;
the water laps slowly at the rocks;
and the ducks from the north are here
at rest on the gray ripples.

The company in which we went
so free of care, so carelessly,
has scattered. Goodbye,
to you who lie behind in graves,
to you who galloped proudly off!
Pockets and heart are empty.

This is the autumn and our harvest—
such as it is, such as it is—
the beginnings of the end, bare trees and barren ground;
but for us only the beginning:
let the wild goat's horn
and the silver trumpet sound!

Reason upon reason
to be thankful:
for the fruit of the earth,
for the fruit of the tree,
for the light of the fire,
and to have come to this season.

The work of our hearts is dust
to be blown about in the winds
by the God of our dead in the dust
but our Lord delighting in life
(let the wild goat's horn
and the silver trumpet sound!)—
our God who imprisons in coffin and grave
and unbinds the bound.

You have loved us greatly and given us
Your laws
for an inheritance,
Your sabbaths, holidays, and seasons of gladness,
distinguishing Israel
from other nations—
distinguishing us
above the shoals of men.
And yet why should we be remembered—
if at all—only for peace, if grief
is also for all? Our hopes,
if they blossom, if they blossom at all, the petals
and fruit fall.

You have given us the strength
to serve You,
but we may serve or not
as we please;
not for peace nor for prosperity,
not even for length of life, have we merited
remembrance; remember us
as the servants
You have inherited.

II
Day of Atonement

The great Giver has ended His disposing; the long day
is over and the gates are closing.
How badly all that had been read
was read by us,
how poorly all that should be said.

All wickedness shall go in smoke.
It must, it must!
The just shall see and be glad.
The sentence is sweet and sustaining;
for we, I suppose, are the just;
and we, the remaining.

If only I could write with four pens between five fingers
and with each pen a different sentence at the same time—
but the rabbis say it is a lost art, a lost art.
I well believe it. And at that of the first twenty sins that we confess,
five are by speech alone;
little wonder that I must ask the Lord to bless
the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart.

Now, as from the dead, I revisit the earth and delight
in the sky, and hear again

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the noise of the city and see
earth's marvelous creatures—men.
Out of nothing I became a being,
and from a being I shall be
nothing—but until then
I rejoice, a mote in Your world,
a spark in Your seeing.

III
Feast of Booths

This was a season of our fathers' joy:
not only when they gathered grapes and
the fruit of trees
in Israel,
but when, locked in the dark and stony
streets,
they held—symbols of a life from which they
were banished
but to which they would surely return—
the branches of palm trees and of willows,
the twigs of the myrtle,
and the bright odorous citrons.
This was the grove of palms with its deep
well
in the stony ghetto in the blaze of noon;
this the living stream lined with willows;
and this the thick-leaved myrtles and trees
heavy with fruit
in the barren ghetto—a garden
where the unjustly hated were justly safe at
last.
In booths this week of holiday
as those who gathered grapes in Israel lived
and also to remember we were cared for
in the wilderness—
I remember how frail my present dwelling is
even if of stones and steel.
I know this is the season of our joy:
we have completed the readings of the Law
and we begin again;
but I remember how slowly I have learnt,
how little,
how fast the year went by, the years—how
few.

IV
Hanukah

The swollen dead fish float on the water;
the dead birds lie in the dust trampled
to feathers;
the lights have been out a long time and the
quick gentle hands that lit them—
rosy in the yellow tapers' glow—
have long ago become merely nails and little
bones,
and of the mouths that said the blessing and
the minds that thought it
only teeth are left and skulls, shards of skulls.
By all means, then, let us have psalms
and days of dedication anew to the old
causes.

Penniless, penniless, I have come with less
and still less
to this place of my need and the lack of this
hour.
That was a comforting word the prophet
spoke:
Not by might nor by power but by My
spirit, said the Lord;
comforting, indeed, for those who have
neither might nor power—
for a blade of grass, for a reed.

The miracle, of course, was not that the oil
for the sacred light—
in a little cruse—lasted as long as they say;
but that the courage of the Maccabees lasted
to this day:
let that nourish my flickering spirit.

Go swiftly in your chariot, my fellow Jew,
you who are blessed with horses;
and I will follow as best I can afoot,
bringing with me perhaps a word or two.
Speak your learned and witty discourses
and I will utter my word or two—
not by might nor by power
but by Your spirit, Lord.

Charles Reznikoff, whose article "New Haven: The Jewish Community" appeared in the November 1947 Commentary, is a poet, novelist, and student of American history. Among his volumes of poetry are: *Five Groups of Verse, Jerusalem the Golden, In Memoriam, Going To and Fro and Walking Up and Down.* Mr. Reznikoff is, in addition, author of the novels: *By the Waters of Manhattan, Testimony, Early History of the Sewing-Machine Operator,* and *The Lionhearted.* He was born in Brooklyn in 1894.

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STUYVESANT TOWN'S THREAT TO OUR LIBERTIES

Government Waives the Constitution for Private Enterprise

CHARLES ABRAMS

LAST July, New York's highest court, by a four to three decision, upheld the right of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company to bar Negroes from its Stuyvesant Town housing project. (*Dorsey* v. *Stuyvesant Town Corporation,* 299 NY 512.) Though the decision received nationwide mention in the press, the general impression was that it concerned only another attempt, perhaps new in its form, to ban Negroes from white neighborhoods. But when the court's majority and dissenting opinions appeared in the law journals, the issue emerged in its full gravity: the case reached down to the very roots of American freedom.

It was not merely that minorities living in slums could now, with the help of city and state governments, be ousted from their homes to make way for "restricted" private developments. Far more important was the fact that an ominous device for circumventing the constitutional safeguards against arbitrary government had received judicial sanction. Public enterprises in private hands were held free to segregate, discriminate, and be above the law. Private corporations, the Court held, may now be lawfully handed the powers and funds of government and use them unhindered by constitutional restraint.

It is not hard to see why dissenting Judge Stanley Fuld characterized the majority opinion as "perplexing." Where power is unlimited, tyranny begins. For centuries the safeguards against abuse of public power have been protected and reinforced. Its release into private hands opens a new chapter in political science. "It is impossible to balance the essence of democracy against fireproof buildings and well-kept lawns," wrote Judge Fuld, ". . . the constitutions, Federal and State, forbid our putting the former into the judicial scales, just as they forbade the city officials from putting it upon the bargaining table. . . this undertaking was a governmentally conceived, governmentally aided, and governmentally regulated project . . . Stuyvesant Town in its role as chosen instrument for this public purpose may not escape the obligations that accompany the privileges."

But Stuyvesant Town *has* escaped those obligations. Judge Fuld's opinion is not the law. The law is that the precious powers of government may now be used to create "private baronies." Indeed, with the recent passage of a federal urban redevelopment law, dozens of them are already in the blueprint stage all over the country.

Never before in American history has such a unique liaison between government and

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NEW YORK STATE'S highest court has upheld the right of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company to restrict "to whites only" its huge housing development on New York's East Side, near the United Nations site, built with the public aid of the City of New York; now the Supreme Court of the United States is preparing to consider the constitutionality of this decision. The struggle to reverse the decision, CHARLES ABRAMS argues here, has significance beyond the housing area, or even the broader field of racial discrimination, important as both are. It is necessary to void a precedent, Mr. Abrams suggests, that may have the most ominous consequences for our whole American democratic pattern of government. Mr. Abrams, a leading authority in the field of housing, is an attorney, and was until recently housing analyst for the New York *Post Home News*. He himself played a prominent role, as counsel, in the legal fight to abolish racial discrimination in Stuyvesant Town. He is the author of *The Future of Housing* and *Revolution in Land.* His article "The Segregation Threat in Housing" appeared in the February 1949 COMMENTARY.

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private enterprise been authorized. But the surrender of public powers to non-representative private groups—always in the name of "social reform"—is not a phenomenon entirely strange to the modern world. It was one of the unique characteristics of the "corporate states" which have weighed like massive incubi on the prostrate body politic of Europe. The judicial approval of Stuyvesant Town represents an ominous relaxation of democratic controls when reinforcement is more essential than ever.

THE Stuyvesant Town "barony" consists of eighteen square city blocks and lies in the heart of New York City's East Side facing the East River between 14th and 20th streets. It cost ninety-three million dollars to build and houses some twenty-five thousand people. It was conceived and sponsored by Park Commissioner Robert Moses as an alternative to public housing. That it is a sound investment for its owner, the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, is due to a huge grant of tax exemption by the city totaling more than fifty-five million dollars, or more than three times the cost of the land. The city also turned over to the company public streets amounting to a fifth of the area; these streets are now closed to the public and no one but the city's comptroller may tread on them without the company's consent. The city also condemned the land, ousting some ten thousand low-income tenants from their homes, as well as a host of storekeepers, churches, schools—and even another publicly regulated housing project. There are no public playgrounds or schools inside the Stuyvesant Town area, for it was feared by Metropolitan's chairman of the board that "Negro children might attend." Negro tenants were to be barred, too, he said, because "Negroes and whites don't mix. A hundred years from now, maybe they will." The company openly admits its intention to discriminate against Negroes, claiming it as a "constitutional right."

The law which authorized this singular undertaking was specially tailored to suit this nine-billion-dollar company. The ostensible public purpose behind these vast gifts of public moneys and powers is called "urban redevelopment," described by the law with the novel term, "superior public use"—which means superior to schools and playgrounds, which are legally only "ordinary" public uses. The novel legal jargon, however, only inadequately conceals a more familiar process. "Urban redevelopment" is but the latest of a succession of devices conceived originally to improve housing and neighborhoods, but which have been perverted to keep minorities "in their place."

Since minorities are most frequently "contained" in slum areas and cannot easily break out directly into better neighborhoods, they tend to infiltrate family by family where they can. A first device to prevent this infiltration was municipal zoning ordinances forbidding occupancy by certain races. These were soon held unconstitutional on the theory that an ordinance is "state action" and therefore violates the 14th Amendment which prohibits states and public agencies from enforcing laws that deny equal protection to citizens. A second device aiming to keep minorities in their places, the racial restrictive covenant, was recently held unenforceable by the courts on the ground that courts are instruments of states and therefore court enforcement would violate the 14th Amendment.*

But "urban redevelopment" is something new and different, the implications of its perversion far more sinister. The racial zoning ordinances and restrictive covenants aim only to bar minorities from coming into certain areas. Urban redevelopment, however, authorizes cities to root them out of areas in which they already live, all in the name of slum clearance. Because slum clearance is a recognized public purpose, the land on which they live and the homes they own may now be taken from them by forced sale.

Further, after acquiring the land for the private developer, the city may then turn it over to him without restrictions, according

*See Charles Abrams, "Homes for Aryans Only," COMMENTARY May 1947, and "The Segregation Threat in Housing," COMMENTARY February 1949.

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to the Stuyvesant Town decision. Cities are authorized to sell it for less than cost, with taxpayers, Negro and white, Jew and Gentile, footing the bill. Yet while benefiting from these powers and subsidies emanating from all the people, the developer is free to discriminate in the renting of dwelling units. The theoretical justification for this is that once the property is in private hands, the discrimination is no longer "state action." The program thus grants "equality of the laws" during the process of eviction, i.e., no favorites are played and all are turned out into the streets with an even hand; but there is no equality in the sharing of the dividends of urban redevelopment. The minority is thus assured equality in the burdens, but never in the fruits. Slum clearance, which was intended to be the preliminary to decent housing, may now become the prelude to mass homelessness.

This is no academic matter, nor is it an isolated bogey inflated by alarmists. Twenty-five states have already passed urban redevelopment laws, and since Congress has now authorized huge federal subsidies for urban redevelopment, mass shifts of minorities from one slum to another worse one, may soon begin. The proportion of the overcrowding in housing occupied by nonwhites is already four times as great as that of whites, the proportion of substandard housing is six times as high. These houses are the ones now most often scheduled for demolition and redevelopment. The evicted minorities find other areas barred to them while the new private redevelopment projects with few exceptions intend to follow the Stuyvesant Town exclusion policies.

The cost in human suffering may be imagined. But the evil of the program lies not only in its brutal imposition upon various minorities, but also, and perhaps primarily, in the fact that states and cities are now permitted by law to become partners to discrimination and injustice—a partnership now sanctioned by an influential court as constitutional. As racial zoning and the restrictive covenant proved, discriminatory practices are epidemic. We are thus witnessing the establishment of a legal precedent which may yet upset the safeguards of one hundred and fifty years of freedom and split the structure of constitutional government.

AWAKENING to the dangers inherent in such urban redevelopment, minority groups have attempted to write anti-bias clauses into the enabling legislation. But their efforts have, to date, been thwarted. One obstacle in the fight has been the glee with which certain legislators—Senators Bricker of Ohio and Cain of Washington deserve special mention—have used civil rights amendments as political footballs; the strategy is to tack anti-discrimination amendments on to social legislation in the hope of alienating enough Southern votes to kill the entire Fair Deal program. (Cain, it might be noted, led the filibuster which defeated the administration's civil rights program.) Unfortunately, some representatives of minority groups fell into the trap, and supported such amendments "regardless of motives." A more apt phrase would have been "regardless of political realities," for the amendment as drawn almost defeated the public housing program which offered the only hope for housing some of the evicted minorities.

At the same time, federal housing officials, who might have been expected to further the fight against discrimination in urban redevelopment, have remained indifferent. So much so, that when an amendment passed the House giving displaced tenants priority in the new urban redevelopment projects, it was smothered in conference because Housing Administrator Raymond M. Foley failed to give it administration approval.

Progress on the local front is only slightly more hopeful. Of all the state urban redevelopment laws now in effect, only Pennsylvania's bar racial discrimination. In New York City a local ordinance forbids granting tax exemption to housing projects which discriminate (but it does not apply to Stuyvesant Town which was authorized before the ordinance passed). San Francisco is the only other city outlawing discrimination in urban redevelopment; Chicago and other cities

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have refused to go along, claiming that private investment would be discouraged. Experience with New York City's law, however, should dissipate Chicago's fears. More than thirty million dollars is now being invested by lending institutions in non-discriminating urban redevelopment projects, and another sixteen million dollars is being advanced for limited dividend projects.

Among the institutions making loans under the city's anti-bias ordinance are the Bowery Savings Bank, whose board chairman Henry Bruere once opposed the ordinance but has since informed the writer that he is aware of the "new social habits" and that his approach in making these loans on non-discriminating undertakings is "entirely pragmatic." The Bowery has a total of thirteen and a half million dollars invested in such projects at as little as three and one-half per cent interest. Another New York project, Queensview Houses, a cooperative, headed by Louis Pink and financed by an eighty per cent loan of six million dollars by the Mutual Life Insurance Company at four per cent, has sold almost all of its apartments to middle-income families although ten of the cooperators will be Negroes.

YET all that has been done in New York City has failed to offset the example of Stuyvesant Town and the implications of its victory in the courts. It is Stuyvesant Town the precedent, rather than Stuyvesant Town the project, that looms so large as a threat to the American way of life.

Throughout America's history, rigid restrictions have been imposed upon the government's use of the eminent domain, tax, and police powers—powers which the New York Court has held may now be used for private developers who are free from such restrictions. These three powers constitute the working tools of any government, be it capitalist, fascist, or socialist. When abused, these are the powers that threaten life, liberty, and property.

The power to regulate, for example, is also the power to regulate out of existence—the American system has therefore always required that the courts stand guard to see that it is exercised reasonably. The power of eminent domain is the power to take another man's property—it may therefore be exercised only for a public use and upon payment of just compensation. The power to tax carries with it the obligation to use the proceeds for public purposes and not for private or class use.

One of the salient differences between democratic and totalitarian governments is that in the latter these powers are subject to the whim of a single dictator, while in a democracy their arbitrary exercise is effectively checked. The whole system of checks and balances which makes up the American republic was erected to prevent the abuse of these powers, or their subordination to private advantage.

In recent years, however, America has veered to what is euphemistically called the "welfare state," and it is here that the Stuyvesant Town decision becomes the judicial authorization for a menacing liaison between private and public enterprises.

WE ARE, to be sure, far from embarking upon any fascist ideology or upon any conscious imitation of fascism's racist aberrations. But political systems have an inherent dynamic of their own; it is not the personal motives of politicians or business men which shape the ultimate pattern in the relationship between the state and the individual.

Freedom is an ethic but it is also the by-product of economic institutions. That it has flourished in America is due not only to the scheme of separation of powers but to the separation of government from business as well. In the American system up to now, enjoyment of both property and personal freedom have been inextricably linked. The linkage survived the great shift from the freehold economy to the modern corporate system, when it continued to be to the interest of the propertied and entrepreneurial classes to oppose government expansion so as to keep taxes low and regulation minimal.

With the release of the welfare and spending powers, however, the competition for

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government aid has taken a new turn. The insulation of business from government is ended and as the government has now become the main functionary in the economic milieu, the driving forces of enterprise are being headed toward the nation's capital. The trader and tycoon are rising to the occasion to manipulate government policies for their own ends, to influence legislation and to harness the public official in the private interest.

In consequence, the welfare state as it is beginning to emerge in America bids fair to be a far cry from the pure and simple dispensing of benefits to America's "common man," as was the intent of its initial sponsors. Under the guidance of certain business interests—as short-sighted as they are powerful—there is, at least in part, emerging a "business welfare state" in which the government is being called upon to pump the funds authorized under the newly expanded welfare programs into certain private pipe-lines. The "common men" are to become, as it were, the residual legatees, instead of being the direct beneficiaries: their benefits will be enjoyed at a second or third remove.

In the name of such public purposes as defense, housing betterment, encouragement of infant as well as senile industries, economic pump-priming during slumps, "protection" of savings, home-ownership encouragement, and a growing list of other high-sounding goals, we are stumbling blindly in several directions, one of which is a subsidies-to-business economy. In the name of social reforms the government is called upon also to loan to business at low rates, to socialize business losses when necessary, to remove risk from private enterprise by federal insurance. In the process, these "protected" enterprises insist, of course, upon the same immunity from regulation they enjoyed before they drew upon the government purse and the government's powers.

The majority opinion of Judge Bruce Bromley in the Stuyvesant Town case justifies this immunity thus: "The increasing and fruitful participation of government, both State and Federal, in the industrial and economic life of the nation—by subsidy and control analogous to that found in this case—suggests the grave and delicate problem in defining the scope of the constitutional inhibitions which would be posed if we were to characterize the rental policy of respondents as governmental action."

DISCRIMINATION against minorities is no sudden, accidental by-product of this emerging business-welfare state. On the contrary, discrimination in older phases of the housing program, wherever the business-government liaison has been in effect, points to an intrinsic relationship and suggests the dangers of its extension into other fields.

It was, for example, in the Federal Housing Administration that the racial restrictive covenant received its greatest impetus. For years, and in fact during the entire period of the New Deal, this government agency recommended the exclusion of minorities from newly developed areas, refused to insure mortgages on property if minorities were allowed to enter, and in an official manual drew up the very racial covenants that private developers were to use if they were to be eligible for FHA insurance.

The government manual warned against such "adverse influences" as "unharmonious racial groups." It said that "if a neighborhood is to retain stability it is necessary that properties shall continue to be occupied by the same social and racial classes." The "model" covenant it recommended provided that "no person of any race other than (race to be inserted) shall use or occupy any building or any lot, except that this covenant shall not prevent occupancy by domestic servants of a different race domiciled with an owner or tenant." In the face of vigorous protest, this manual was finally modified; but there is all too little evidence of any genuine change of heart.

Similar tendencies were noted in the liquidation operations of the Home Owners Loan Corporation. So too with urban redevelopment.

A 1944 federal memorandum on the subject ("for internal use only") states: "It is

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unfortunately true that, with but few exceptions, a displacement of neighborhood population by a new group results in an immediate lowering of the neighborhood level; that is, when higher groups leave, their places are taken by lower groups, '4' people drive out '5' people, rather than the other way around." The "lower groups" or "4" people are then listed as Negroes and Jews, and examples of decline in values as a result of the "travel of Jewish groups from an original semi-ghetto" are cited.

The report goes on: "It is, of course, substantially impossible under our present social and economic system to effectively control people's movements. There is no way, nor is it necessarily socially desirable that there be a way to keep people where they are. It is, therefore, extremely difficult to prevent the encroachment upon other neighborhoods of people of unharmonious economic, social, national, and racial groups. The problem must be approached indirectly and, therefore, with poor efficiency and with only partial result."

Three "indirect" methods to "contain neighborhoods" and to keep out the "undesirables" were then proposed, including restrictive covenants which were recommended as "a rallying point around which neighborhood residents could gather to fight encroachment."

To stamp out discrimination in one or a few government agencies, worthwhile as this is, does not affect the disease itself but only dabs at the more irritating symptoms. For the evil of discrimination in housing is not localized; nor is it due to the personal prejudice of officials; it flows from the government-business relationship itself.

Democratic government and democratic business act under almost opposite sets of ethics and principles. Private business may, in certain respects, discriminate if it wishes to; democratic government is bound to the principle of non-discrimination and the equal protection of the laws. According to the ideal of "free enterprise," the entrepreneur may be single-minded in his quest for profit, employ whomsoever he chooses, rent his product to whom he selects, do business with whom he wants. Minority and majority alike compete with their time, money, and talents. To be sure, abstractly speaking, the dominance of the profit motive in the economic system is supposed to be an assurance of egalitarianism, of the hiring of the most efficient employe and the catering to the source of profit, regardless of the race or ancestry of the worker or customer. But the real, working economic system under which we live deviates from the ideal model of the laisser-faire economists in a few important areas; economic motives do not always govern personal prejudice, and this is especially true when it touches upon the subject of housing: a man's home is his castle and an impassable moat still separates the "elite" from the unwanted in American neighborhoods. Exclusion practices function also in other fields in which employers as well as employes may be the participants.

In the private enterprise economy, however, government's role is that of keeper of the democratic morals, and it often sees that free enterprise remains truly free—a cash transaction in the open market—and is not subordinated to monopolistic restraints or racial dogmas. Any aberration in the state's activities in the direction of discrimination is subject to check by the courts, while simultaneously government is drawn toward imposing its higher standards upon private enterprise when the latter forsakes the cash-nexus for the racial-nexus. Thus, hotels and restaurants are occasionally forbidden to discriminate though they are private businesses; courts refuse to enforce contracts that are against public policy, such as restrictive covenants. Employers may be forbidden to discriminate in carrying out public contracts, even in private employment. So too, unions may be kept in line with the constitutional ethic, when they are beneficiaries of government aid or power. The free enterprise society, regulated by democratic government against abuse, has produced one of the great historical demonstrations of a tolerant society.

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But in the establishment of the new government-business liaison, the ethics of the entrepreneur are not elevated to the governmental level. On the contrary, the tendency has been for government agencies to lower their own standards to those of the illiberal self-seeking entrepreneurs who find catering to prejudice easier or lucrative. This is so—and must be so—because the establishment of the joint venture imposes a responsibility upon the administrators to make the joint venture function efficiently. Thus, for example, when the subsidized builder promises his home-buying prospect a restricted neighborhood, FHA tends to acquiesce or even encourage the policy.

This should be no surprise, for FHA depends for its success upon getting a sufficient volume of housing-insurance business to make its actuarial formulas work. If this public agency made its aid to builders conditional upon non-discrimination by the latter, it might not get enough mortgage insurance to justify its existence. The same is true in joint ventures such as urban redevelopment. Not the assurance of equality in the market-place nor the inauguration of experiments in interracial harmony, but the financial success of the joint enterprise becomes the primary concern of the public administrators. Thus the government attitude becomes conditioned by the privileged private needs and interests, and soon private prejudices become part of the public policy.

A second reason for the degradation of democratic values is that the public agencies become dependent upon their private beneficiaries for lobby support in Congress. This is no secret in Washington today. The agencies best accommodated by Congress are those with an active private lobby campaigning for them. It is inevitable, therefore, that the agency officials will tend to yield to the pressures, prejudices, and customs of the beneficiary, and will close their eyes to the traditional ethical code for government behavior.

Still another reason is that few federal administrators who enact regulations are anxious to set them according to the relatively higher standard of racial tolerance in the North. They are apt to be "practical" and make their rules so they can function in the South as well. What may therefore be a localized discriminatory custom tends to become the "common denominator" in racial policy, and it is usually less than the standard set by the Bill of Rights.

Thus it is that inalienable rights may be diluted, governmental standards undermined, and safeguards of freedom whittled down, until racism is not only acquiesced in but becomes part of the customs and ultimately of the law of the land.

THE strong dissenting opinion of Judge Fuld, the sharply divided court, and the crucial nature of the issue, however, all give hope that the Supreme Court of the United States will accept review of the case and perhaps reverse the holding.

This court has not been unaware of the implications of the growth of private governments, and since the days of the New Deal has rendered a series of decisions bringing them within the fold of the Constitution.

The Democratic party of Texas, declared to be a private voluntary corporation by state laws, was enjoined from refusing a Negro a Democratic ballot. It was held to be "an agency of the state in so far as it determines the participants in a primary election." (*Smith* v. *Allright,* 321 US 629-1944.)

When a Negro railroad employe sued to enjoin discrimination against him by a labor union which was the exclusive bargaining representative under the Railway Labor Act, the Court described the union as "clothed with power not unlike a legislature which is subject to constitutional limitations on its power to deny, restrict, destroy or discriminate against the rights of those for whom it legislates and which is also under an affirmative constitutional duty to protect those rights." (*Steele* v. *Louisville & Nashville R.R. Co.,* 323 US 192-1944.)

A company town that refused to allow a member of Jehovah's Witnesses to use its streets for the distribution of religious literature was enjoined by the Court, which said

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that "the state urges in effect that the corporation's right to control the inhabitants of Chickasaw is co-extensive with the right of a home owner to regulate the conduct of his guests. We cannot accept that contention. Ownership does not always mean absolute dominion. . . . Since these facilities are built and operated primarily to benefit the public and since their operation is essentially a public function, it is subject to state regulation." (*Marsh* v. *Alabama,* 326 US 501-1946.)

A Federal District Court in West Virginia found that a renting of a municipally-built swimming pool to a private company did not authorize discrimination since "the voice is Jacob's voice even though 'the hands are the hands of Esau.' " (*Lawrence* v *Hancock,* 76 Fed. Sup. 1004-1948.)

But while these cases have indicated an alertness on the part of the courts to the menace to civil rights inherent in the new "quasi-public" corporations,* the majority opinion in the Stuyvesant Town case has held to the view that the constitutional prohibition against racial discrimination is a prohibition against the state and that Stuyvesant Town as such is not a "state." It holds that the cases cited above are not controlling.

The dissenting judges, on the other hand, insisted: "The concept of 'state action' has been vitalized and expanded; the definition of 'private' conduct in this context has been tightened and restricted. . . . The construction and operation of Stuyvesant Town are not matters of 'merely private concern'. . . . Everywhere in evidence are the voice and authority of the State and City. . . . Stuyvesant is in no sense an ordinary private landlord. . . . The argument overlooks that the constitutional rights of American citizens are involved and that such rights may not be used as pawns in driving bargains. . . . The mandate that there be equal protection of the laws, designed as a basic safeguard for all, binds us and respondents as well to put an end to this discrimination."

In Stuyvesant Town, the issue of private government versus the Constitution is clearly drawn. The crucial question is whether a 1789 Constitution, devised for a private enterprise system and a democratic government, can safely serve as a basis for a business-welfare state. Unless the challenge is clearly seen in its full portent, and unless shaken principles and safeguards are retrieved and re-affirmed, the stage may be set in the years to come for a dangerous innovation on the American political scene.

*After the City of New York had continuously taken the position that Stuyvesant Town was "private," it issued a report on housing shortly after the Stuyvesant Town decision calling it "quasi-public housing."

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GOD AND THE PSYCHOANALYSTS

Can Freud and Religion Be Reconciled?

IRVING KRISTOL

My courage fails me, therefore, at the thought of rising up as a prophet before my fellow-men, and I bow to the reproach that I have no consolation to offer them; for at bottom that is what they all demand—the frenzied revolutionary as passionately as the most pious believer.
—Sigmund Freud

PSYCHOANALYSIS was from its very beginnings disrespectful, when not positively hostile, towards all existing religious creeds and institutions. Naturally, the religious rhetoricians replied with heat, though, it must be said, with unequal light. The contest was not exactly an exciting one, if only because few people could get enthusiastic about God, one way or the other. The psychoanalysts found it sufficient to explain with supreme objectivity just how it was that this mountain of nonsense and error came to rest on human shoulders. The preachers retorted with anathemas or plaints of misrepresentation. The general conviction of the century was that the analysts were going to unnecessary extremes of detail to dissect a patient ripe for the grave, and that the patient was showing a lack of taste in hanging on so grimly to a life that held no future for him.

But then the contest was transplanted to the melting pot of America, with astonishing consequences. In America all races and creeds live and work peacefully side by side—why should not ideas do likewise? For the ancient habit of supposing that an idea was true or false, there was substituted the more "democratic" way of regarding all ideas as aspects of a universal Truth which, if all of it were known, would offend no one and satisfy all. It is under such favorable circumstances, and in such a benign climate of opinion, that the current love affair between psychoanalysis and religion has been, time and again, consummated. There have been bickerings and quarrels, of course, and the Catholic Church has shown itself to be a rather frigid partner. But, all in all, things have gone well, and the occasional Catholic reserve has been more than made up for by Protestant acquiescence and Jewish ardor.

WHERE once a Judaism liberated from the ghetto fled into the arms of a universal Pure Reason (which did, after all, proclaim honorable intentions), now a Judaism liberated from just about everything religious embraces psychoanalysis without a first thought as to the propriety of the liaison. So we read of a speech by the dean of Hebrew Union Schools, calling for a re-examination of religious teachings to determine whether "they strengthen or weaken the mental and emotional health of the common man"—the assumption obviously being that God is a fiction anyhow and He may as well make Himself useful. Another distinguished professor at Hebrew Union College is on record with this "tip" for alert investors: "The person who will contribute money for religio-psychoana-

PERHAPS nothing is more characteristic of our times than the way that ideas usually thought to be contrary to each other are often enthusiastically upheld by one person in one breath; so it is with our democratic political thinkers who have rediscovered the virtues of conservatism, and with our avant-garde intellectuals who are most vocally concerned with tradition. And so it is, IRVING KRISTOL asserts here, with our religious leaders who are embracing psychoanalysis—or their version of it—as an apparently indispensable support for the good American life. Mr. Kristol is an assistant editor of COMMENTARY. He was born in New York in 1920 and was graduated from the City College of New York.

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lytic inquiry will have entered upon the way of all ways in which religion can be furthered by money." And two bright young rabbis have proposed to a conference of Jewish chaplains that the prayer books for hospitalized Jewish veterans be "screened" by psychiatrists to eliminate "many mystic elements from religion." Everyone knows how toxic mysticism is.

The monument to this tendency is, of course, the late Joshua Loth Liebman's *Peace of Mind*. This book informs us quite simply that "psychological discoveries about conduct and motive are really the most recent syllables of the divine"; that "men who are inwardly tormented and emotionally unhappy can never be good partners of God"; that the Decalogue was, for its time, rather sensible: "in the stages of human development from infancy to adolescence, it is quite proper to present rules of moral behavior as categorical commandments"; that atheism is the result of a child's being rejected by its parents; that "businessmen attacking the administration, grumbling about taxes, or worrying about our relations with Russia" ignore the fact that "the true root of their anxiety lies deep within themselves"; that "a wise religion" [no mention is made of a true one] "is indispensable to peace of mind"; that self-confident Americans who regard themselves as "responsible co-workers with God" can have no use for all those religious notions which arose out of the "helpless, poverty-stricken, powerless motifs in European culture." The book closes with a list of "commandments of a new morality," the first of which is: "Thou shalt not be afraid of thy hidden impulses."

In an attempt to dispel the impression that *Peace of Mind* made upon many—that today no one is so sick as our spiritual healers—Fulton J. Sheen has written a Catholic *Peace of Soul*. Monsignor Sheen makes it clear that it is only with the greatest of distaste that he has written this book, and that it is to be taken as a concession to modern man's moral disorder. He is repelled by the "scum and sediment" of the unconscious and feels sure that ecclesiastical dogma would prefer that the unconscious not exist. But since it reputedly does, Monsignor Sheen sets out to purge psychoanalysis of its impurities, absorb it into the Catholic intellectual hierarchy, and leave it to perish there of boredom. These impurities are attributed to a mis-emphasis on "sex analysis" (Freudianism), which Monsignor Sheen accuses of undermining the moral order and defying the prerogatives of religion and church. Specifically, he dislikes the fact that psychoanalytical patients spend so much time on their backs, a posture which invites the devil; he wishes to save "sin" as a reality born of a defective will and not let it be dismissed as a neurotic fancy; and he would like to mark out the boundaries between the confessional and psychoanalysis, leaving for the latter only those situations where the emotional derangement could have had no moral (or immoral) antecedents —which would leave it with very little at all. He is especially friendly to self-analysis because the intimacy between patient and analyst is a sore temptation as well as a trespass on the clerical province.

All this indicates that Monsignor Sheen is considerably more zealous than was Rabbi Liebman in asserting the priority of morality and the church over psychoanalysis. Yet they have more in common than would appear at first sight, even more than their literary ties to the fraternity of vulgar journalism (Monsignor Sheen writes: "Nine months later the Eternal established its beachhead in Bethlehem. . . ."). Both would like to be of assistance to those modern psychoanalysts who would "revise" or emasculate Freud to make him palatable, or even useful, to the *ecclesia*. Though Monsignor Sheen, unlike Rabbi Liebman, gives a positive religious status to anxiety—as a necessary quality of man who is a fallen creature, and as a spur to seeking God—he is just as eager for this anxiety not to be taken too much to heart: Monsignor Sheen promises peace of soul inside the Catholic Church as glibly as Rabbi Liebman promises peace of mind outside it. Where for Rabbi Liebman an excess of anxiety is "unhealthy," for Monsignor Sheen it is—unless it is quickly dissolved into Catholic

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"peace of soul"—a possible prelude to heresy and a certain sign of deficient faith. For neither of these two clerics is the existence of God, and man's relation with Him, a problem which should worry men to morbid excess. And both join their voices in eagerly quoting from psychiatrists' testimonials concerning the beneficent influence of religion on mental health.

But, most of all, what Monsignor Sheen and Rabbi Liebman and their numerous Protestant counterparts share is a disinclination, or inability, to take Freud seriously, to take his challenge to religion seriously, and in the end, to take religion itself seriously.

WHAT is remarkable in all current demonstrations of how well religion and psychoanalysis supplement each other, is that the question of truth—whether we live under God or entirely in the realm of nature—is ignored. Most clerics and analysts blithely agree that religion and psychoanalysis have at heart the same intention: to help men "adjust," to cure them of their vexatious and wasteful psychic habits (lasting despair and anxiety), to make them happy or virtuous or productive. In so far as religion and psychoanalysis succeed in this aim, they are "true." But against this stands the overwhelming objection of Nietzsche: "Nobody will very readily regard a doctrine as true merely because it makes people happy or virtuous. . . . A thing could be *true*, although it were in the highest degree injurious and dangerous; indeed the fundamental constitution of existence might be such that one succumbed by a full knowledge of it."

And Moses and Freud are in agreement with at least the first part of Nietzsche's statement; they came to speak the truth about the fundamental constitution of existence and not to sow propaganda which would lead men to feel themselves happy or virtuous. Moses did not promise the Jews "happiness," nor did he say they should walk in the path of the Law because he thought it a virtuous law. The Law was true because it was divine—it was God's Law, a revelation of man's place in the fundamental constitution of existence. Though men suffer and die in the following of it, yet it is the truth, and men's true happiness and virtue are in adhering to this truth—because it is true; any other kind of pretended happiness is but mere euphoria. Freud, in turn, did not assert that religion made men "unhappy,"* but that it was based on an illusion about the fundamental constitution of existence. Freud, like Moses, could not conceive of authentic happiness as something separate from truth. In his eyes, religion was a mass obsessional neurosis, and all attempts to enlist psychoanalysis in its support were dementedly clever stratagems whereby the neurotic incorporated a new experience into a larger obsessional pattern. Even if it could be proved that men could not live without religion, that "they succumbed by a full knowledge" of reality, this showed only that man was a creature who could not live in the truth.

THE truths of religion and psychoanalysis, it should be clear, lay mutually exclusive claims upon the individual; their understanding of "the fundamental constitution of existence" is antithetical.

For religion, we live under the jurisdiction of the past. The truth is in the revelation on Sinai, and in Scripture, which fully comprehends us while we are powerless to fully comprehend it. God's word, spoken in the remote past and now hardly audible, is ever more true than the persistent chatter of men. Religion informs us that our ancestors were wiser and holier than we; that they were therefore more normal because they lived by divine Law, while our laws are driftwood in the stream of time; that no matter how mightily we strive we shall probably never see with their clarity into the fundamental

*That religion could claim a "therapeutic" value, Freud understood very well in his own way: "The true believer is in a high degree protected against the danger of certain neurotic afflictions; by accepting the universal neurosis he is spared the task of forming a personal neurosis"; and further: "At such a cost—by the forcible imposition of mental infantilism and inducing a mass delusion—religion succeeds in saving many people from individual neuroses."

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constitution of existence and shall always be of little worth compared with them; and that, indeed, the virtue we inherit by reason of being descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is far greater than any we can hope to claim to have merited. "What are we? What is our life? What is our piety? . . . Nevertheless we are Thy people, the children of Thy covenant, the children of Abraham. . . ."

Psychoanalysis, on the other hand, must repeat Freud's words: "But these ancestors of ours were far more ignorant than we." Psychoanalysis insists that it understands the past better than the past understood itself. Since all men have been driven by unconscious motivations which only we moderns really understand, and of which past generations were for the most part ignorant, a Freud of the 20th century, or, presumably, one of his competent pupils, equipped with the tools of psychoanalysis, can know Moses, Da Vinci, Michelangelo, and Dostoevsky better than they knew themselves. At most we can say of certain great minds of the past that they had an intuitive and premature inkling of the true constitution of human nature and existence which is now known (or will soon be known) in its fullness. The history of the human race is a tale of growth from primitive times—when men were as children—to the present age of adulthood, when man finally understands himself and his history.

There is a crucial disagreement here, which can never be mediated, as to what is the true and the real. Psychoanalysis explains religion; it describes how and why religion came into being, how and why what we clearly see to be irrational was accepted as super-rationally true, and how and why that which we know to be a product of the human fancy came to be regarded as an existing, supernatural being.* To this, religion answers that the understanding of psychoanalysis is only a dismal, sophisticated misunderstanding, that human reason is inferior to divine reason, that the very existence of psychoanalysis is a symptom of gross spiritual distress, and that religion understands the psychoanalyst better than the psychoanalyst understands himself.

IN THIS dialogue between psychoanalysis and religion, it is to be expected that psychoanalysis would try to establish its position behind the starched apron of science. What is surprising is that the religionists should be so eager to assist it—until we remember that in the long, grueling warfare between science and organized religion, the latter received valuable instruction in tactics. Abandoning the frontal attack, the pastors were successfully able to persuade the scientists that science was not at all atheistic, as some brash people claimed, but that its sphere of activity was quite a different one from that of religion, that it dealt with an "abstract" reality and not the "real" reality, that its arid language was inadequate to religious statement, that it operated on another "level of meaning," and so on. In the same way today, pacific priests and analysts are eager that psychoanalysis should renounce its wild and Freudian past and become a medical science; for the more medicinal it is, the smaller is the danger that it will seem to say anything about the fundamental constitution of existence, the less does it encroach upon religion, and the greater is the mutual security of religious and psychoanalytic institutions; psychoanalysis would deal only with "health" and never with "truth." The result is a revision and "correction" of Freud—especially in America—which tends to make of psychoanalysts mental counsellors, in no necessary conflict with religion, "adjusting" patients to their infirmities, their limitations of talent, their jobs (or else the analyst serves as a vocational guide), their bad luck, their wives, their children, and, in the armed forces, to their officers. Some analysts even send their patients to church, as a therapy.

Psychoanalysis, then, would seem to be on its way to becoming simply the medical treatment of the psyche, cohabiting with re-

*The psychoanalytical theories of Jung, which accept the subjective religious experience as something ultimate, are an interesting deviation from this line. But Jung never commits himself as to whether God *is*, and therefore cannot genuinely decide whether the religious experience is normal or abnormal.

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ligion in all amiability. But on this way it stumbles and falls. For if psychoanalysis is disloyal to the implications of its method—to what this method assumes as the fundamental constitution of existence, as enunciated by Freud—it sinks into a realm of relativism in which the human intellect circles upon itself like a dog chasing its tail.

Psychoanalysis is unlike traditional medicine in that nature does not so readily supply us with a working definition of the psychically "normal." Our definition of physical normality ("health") is not something we have strenuously to imagine or blindly to postulate, and there are obvious and sharp limits to possible disagreement; it is simply given to us because we are what we are. But psychoanalysis is in a more ambiguous position. Its definition of mental health has to be in good measure "thought up," and it must be done by men whose ideas are influenced by their lives and times. Psychoanalysis is always open to the accusation that its criteria of "neurosis" and "mental health" and "adjustment" have a cultural bias, and are influenced by political ideologies, national prejudices, and personal whims. To take the accusation in its most general form: any psychoanalytical approach which, out of diplomatic cordiality toward religion, renounces its claim to an objective knowledge of human nature or to a lasting, true insight into the fundamental constitution of existence, must admit that it is historically and socially conditioned. And once there is no objectively *true* human nature which is taken as the norm, there is no possibility of general agreement on what it means to be "sick" and what it means to be "cured." We can then have Communist analysts, Nazi analysts, democratic analysts, anarchist analysts, all with irreconcilable criteria of mental health.

Actually, the dilemma of the "revisionist" schools of psychoanalysis arises from their reluctance to abandon—at the same time that they drop all Freudian "metaphysics"—either of the two branches of psychoanalysis joined by Freud: the pathological and the general psychological. (This distinction is very lucidly made by Theodore Reik in *Listening With the Third Ear.*) Pathological psychology seems to have some intimate relation with the organic, intimate enough, in any case, for it to be a (still largely unexplored) sub-branch of medicine. But in this field, psychoanalysis has to compete with formal psychiatry and neurology, both of which are closer to what is universally deemed medical science: psychoanalysis can "explain" more than psychiatry only because it is less rigorously scientific. To be sure, psychoanalysis has effected cures of pathological cases. But cures have also been reached by treatments which have nothing to do with psychoanalysis, nor can psychoanalysis claim greater efficiency, greater rapidity, or any other advantage. Moreover, psychoanalysis is splintered into various schools, all of which claim to cure, and no way exists of deciding for or against any one of them, or of finding out whether they may work for reasons quite different from those given by all of them. In pathology, psychoanalysis stands to the ideal of medical science as the herb-doctor (whose herbs work too sometimes, and not entirely by chance) to a diagnostician.

Yet when psychoanalysis turns to non-pathological cases, and tries to fall back upon general psychology, upon its theory of human nature, for a warrant of competence, then it has to say what human nature rightfully *is;* it has to be explicit as to whether man prays to God or is trapped in an obsessional neurosis, it has to decide the question of truth before it dares raise the question of therapy. And this would involve it in those discussions about man and his place in the universe which would be fatal to its ambitions to live at peace with religion.

Freud, too, was faced with the problem that before one could aim at healing human nature it was necessary to decide what human nature in its undamaged state is, and in his analysis of dreams he stepped unhesitatingly from pathology to depth (general) psychology. The pathological and the abnormal were points of departure for the determination of the "really" normal, and Freud

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ceased to be a doctor and became a thinker. Truth precedes healing—Freud's own italicized definition of the task of psychoanalysis was "*education to reality.*" Where in all of his past history man had achieved only a self-deceptive self-consciousness, riddled with mythical projections of the unconscious, now man has acquired the ability to see the human situation as it really is.

PERHAPS because of the verbal resonance of such terms as the "unconscious" and the "libido," and certainly because of his own harsh comments on various facile and optimistic beliefs, Freud is often viewed as a reaction to the 19th century's certainty that man was master of his fate and to its adoration of the goddess Reason. Freud himself, in certain passages, seemed to encourage this interpretation, as when he noted the three wounds inflicted by science on humanity's self-love: the cosmological blow of the Copernican revolution, the biological blow of Darwinian evolution, and the psychological blow of Freudianism. But such an interpretation of Freud would be erroneous, and Freud's remarks seeming to support it must be understood mainly as a not unflattering explanation of the hostility which his contemporaries directed at him.

Copernicus, Darwin, and Freud did not attack *man's* self-love, but only the *religious man's* self-respect. They diminished God (though, except for Freud, without intention) and aggrandized man as the rational animal. They did not undermine man's reason, but enthroned it, at the expense of the religious authority. Freud did not come to proclaim the law of Reason at an end—he came to fulfil it, at the same time explaining how previous efforts at fulfilment had been overly glib and superficial. Man, by virtue of Freud's work, was not less than he had been; he was infinitely more, facing for the first time the prospect of an authentic self-consciousness and self-control which would make him the true measure of all things. Though Freud, in comparison with his contemporaries, complicated human nature, it was the kind of theoretical complication (like Einsteinian physics) which makes possible the lucid solution of hitherto baffling problems; it is a gain for Reason, not a loss.

Freudianism was a legitimate son of 19th-century philosophy (Marxism was another) which declared that in all previous world history the human mind had not been free but had been enslaved to nature or society, and that now life according to true Reason (not ideological or neurotic rationalization) was within men's reach. The epoch of human history in which man's mind had been "alienated" from reality was approaching its end. And Freud was supremely a man of the 19th century in his idea of history as the development of the human race from infancy to adulthood, in his conceiving of the biography of humanity as entirely analogous to the biography of the individual, with religion as a childlike obsessional neurosis which the child had failed to outgrow and which the doctor was now hurrying to cure, so as to secure, in his own words, "the psychological ideal, the primacy of the intelligence."

Freud is of one mind with Spinoza, that to have a rational understanding of what our instincts (Spinoza called them passions) are up to, is to make us master of them. The purpose of psychoanalysis is to redeem the ego from compulsive irrationality (neurosis) and to place the instinctual libido in the service of a rational ego, for it is not the instinctual unconscious itself which resists psychoanalytical treatment—its goal is to be discharged, into consciousness or action—but the irrational ego, the ego that has "solved" its problems by a non-rational adjustment (neurosis) and that desperately defends its precarious "solution." This redemption of the rational ego is achieved in the three steps of the psychoanalytical treatment: (1) the "recall" of the repressed—a conscious awareness of what is behind the particular neurosis; (2) transference, or re-direction of the libidinal force to the analyst, which gives the ego a chance to wrestle openly, through a transference-neurosis, with the material raised from the unconscious; (3) mastery of the instinctual urges by the rational ego.

It is clear from this how absurd is the

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charge against Freud of being the high priest of the irrational, goading the instincts, especially the sexual instincts, into a *coup d'état.* (Monsignor Sheen seems to be of this opinion.) It would be more accurate to say that Freud was a supreme puritan. The tenor of Freud's writings is that the present sexual standards of respectability are maliciously provocative of nervous disorder. His plea for greater sexual freedom is the plea of a wise and experienced statesman, not the appeal of an irresponsible radical. For Freud, sex is the blind, powerful, and eternally rebellious subject of the legitimate despot Reason. Revolt means calamity: at the least, the established order is forced to share power with new tribunes, in an uneasy compromise; at the most, sheer anarchy prevails. It is because of his fear of the herd of sexual instincts that Freud would concede so much to them, would abrogate the existing sexual morality in favor of a less provocative one, would assure a free genital sexuality in order to provide protection to all those other zones threatened with erotic invasion. The localization in the genitals of the sexual urge is the necessary condition for the natural reign of Reason. The greater the liberty of the genitalia in satisfying this urge, the greater the security of the Rational state.

THERE are two fairly distinct trends in Freud's analysis of religion, both of them hostile, but corresponding, respectively, to his earlier mood of moderate hope and his later mood of only faintly relieved gloom. The second is more important in what it tells us about the ultimate destiny of psychoanalysis. The first is important too, however, in that it provided a crucial supplement to the rationalist refutation of religion. Though rationalists of the 18th and 19th centuries spoke of the slow education of human reason from superstition upwards, from credulousness and helplessness to manly independence of spirit, it was Freud who came to show the psychological necessity of this evolutionary process. Freud's attack on religion cut more deeply than even that of Voltaire or Marx, for while Voltaire could expose the unreasonableness of religious dogmas, and Marx could show how religion mirrored the inauthenticity of man in the pre-Communist era, neither could satisfactorily explain the psychological mechanism by which human beings came to be so duped in the first place and why it lasted as long as it did.

According to Freud, religion is the price paid for the *blind* renunciation of inherent instincts. Religious prohibitions deprive sexuality of its due at the same time that religious creeds leave reason defenseless and feeble, so that sexuality is able to reappear in the disguise of neurotic behavior such as prayer, pilgrimage, theological speculation, and the like. Religions owe their obsessive character to "important happenings in the primeval history of the human family" and "derive their effect on mankind from the historical truth they contain"—a truth imprinted on the racial memory of every newborn child. The "happening" from which religion grew was the slaying and communal eating, in the primal horde, of the primal father by his sons, who had joined together in order to share the father's sexual prerogatives—the original Oedipean revolt, and one which each individual recapitulates in his own mental experience. But the victorious sons were tormented by anxiety about their portentous deed, and by fear of continual, bloody sexual rivalry. So there came into being, in these "ages of ignorance and intellectual weakness," the sense of guilt and sin, as well as moral codes and religious catechisms, to repress all sexual rivalry with the fathers, to appease the memory of the primal father who had been transformed into God, and to guarantee the existence of an orderly community. And each individual not only "remembers" the historic past, but in his own lifetime has to make some sort of adjustment to his own Oedipus complex, his impotence as a child to challenge the father for the mother's favors, his jealousy, and the anxious repression of it.

The history of religion is analogical to the history of neurosis in the growing child, its strength gathered from childhood anxieties

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and frustrations, and this strength dissipated with natural growth into adult rationality. The history of humanity, like the life-history of every one of its members, is a process of maturation in which the instinctual renunciations necessary for the stability of the community are rationally comprehended and lose their malevolent potential. Freud writes:

"We know that the human child cannot well complete its development towards culture without passing through a more or less distinct phase of neurosis. This is because the child is unable to suppress by rational mental effort so many of those instinctual impulsions which cannot later be turned into account, but has to check them by acts of repression, behind which there stands as a rule an anxiety motive. Most of these child neuroses are overcome spontaneously as one grows up, and especially is this the fate of the obsessional neuroses of childhood. The remainder can be cleared up later by psychoanalytical treatment." And in the same volume (*The Future of an Illusion*): "One might prophesy that the abandoning of religion must take place with the fateful inexorability of growth, and that we are just now in the middle of this phase of development."

By virtue of science and psychoanalysis, mankind begins to see the approaches to the Kingdom of Reason. The false knowledge of a supernatural Other, which was only an evasion of true self-knowledge, will be sloughed off like an outworn garment, and God, together with bibles, saints, and churches, will be consigned to the museum of human infancy.

WHAT can religion reply to this? It is impossible to ask: what *does* religion reply to this, for religion in our time for the most part does not reply at all. It either gives up the ghost and tries to show its social and psychological utility in an imperfect world where the triumph of Reason is not yet complete; or it utters grave twaddle about incorporating "the enduring insights" of psychoanalysis in a "larger perspective," as if its perspective were infinitely elastic. Religion is uncertain, does not know whether we were really on Sinai or whether it was only a dream.

Yet there are certain lines of argument, it seems to me, which religious thought, because it is religious, must take. Religion must agree with psychoanalysis that the world in which we live is sick, but where psychoanalysis asserts that religion is a symptom of this illness, religion must cling to its own diagnosis and see psychoanalysis itself as a symptom of a mind diseased. Religion has to deny the thesis of progressive human evolution, and must explain psychoanalysis, must explain it away, by tracing its genesis and showing that the error in which it is involved points to the truth which it denies.

Psychoanalysis, in the eyes of religion, is a historical passion of men obsessed with the death of God. Nietzsche proclaimed that God was dead, Freud followed with the news that we had eaten and devoured His human archetype, and that His spiritual existence had always been an illusion. Both were right, for the 19th and 20th centuries have regarded God as a corpse whose essence has been appropriated by man—the so-called divine attributes have been made over into human possibilities. Yet in this era of humanism and godlessness, man found himself more than ever alienated: his flight from God has also been a flight from his true self, which had been made in His image. So it was that Freud could build a theory of human nature on the basis of his experience with hysterics and neurotics, a unique and strange achievement which testifies to our modern psychic equilibrium, whose fulcrum is at the edge of an abyss.

Religion cannot deny that psychoanalysis has discovered the unconscious. It can only say that the unconscious as such is a new phenomenon, the toll paid to God and nature for the presumptive effort to have man's conscious rationality prevail over all of existing reality—including divine reality; in the days when God's face was turned to man, the unconscious was integrated with consciousness and did not whirl madly free through psychic space. The age of Reason, through a series of strenuous introjections, has attempted to

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press all of religious reality into the rational intellect and to imprison God, cowering and sullen, behind the forehead. The reward of this effort is psychic fragmentation, for divine reality is not within the rational mind of man but outside it, and the mind which would encompass it bursts. Instead of a divine reality that was a great chain of being, there is now, for each man, only a hall of mirrors. Since man has cut all ties with divine reality, has indeed denied to it reality, his psyche has been sentenced to follow upon itself in a dark and unending maze.

Psychoanalysis, religion might say, comes not to remove insanity, but to inaugurate it.

IT WOULD seem that this debate between psychoanalysis and religion can continue indefinitely, until it is terminated by God speaking unequivocally or the Kingdom of Reason being attained. And since God is silent and the Kingdom of Reason unborn, the debate goes on, important but nonetheless wearisome. But it is not a debate without end—for that we have Freud's word. Freud's final and tragic message is that the truth is with Reason and against God, but it is a truth in which man probably cannot live. Rational self-consciousness is the avenue to perfect wisdom, which leads in most men to perfect despair. Though Reason still has the task of "reconciling men to civilization," it is an authority entirely vitiated by the fact that "man is a creature of weak intelligence who is governed by his instinctual needs."

This message is found in Freud's later "metapsychological" works, such as *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* and *Civilization and Its Discontents.* Many contemporary psychoanalysts, exercising the privilege of little minds to "revise" greater ones, casually dismiss these writings as deviations from the pure principles of science. But Freud was no eccentric, and if he went beyond the conventional limits of psychological science in his later works (just as he did, incidentally, in his earlier ones), he must have been of the serious opinion that the limits were too confining for the truth as he then saw it. In a letter to Einstein in 1932, in which he outlined his theory of the death instinct as the cause of war, Freud wrote: "All this may give you the impression that our theories amount to a species of mythology, and a gloomy one at that! But does not every natural science lead ultimately to this—a sort of mythology?"

Freud's final "mythology" involves a modification of the earlier postulated contradiction between sexual instincts and ego instincts into one between Eros and Thanatos, the life instinct and the death instinct. The concept of instinct is redefined as "a tendency innate in living organic matter impelling it towards the reinstatement of an earlier condition." What is this earlier condition? "It must be an ancient starting point, which the living being left long ago, and to which it harks back again by all the circuitous paths of development. If we may assume as an experience admitting of no exception that everything living dies from causes within itself, and returns to the inorganic, we can only say 'The goal of all life is death.' . . ." This drive toward extinction is countered by the sexual and reproductive instincts, which are the only ones which do not have as their aim the reinstatement of a previous condition, and which push to life, its extension and unification.*

Instead of being the evolution of Reason and its eventual enthronement, history is blind and its contradictions unresolvable: "And now, it seems to me, the meaning of the evolution of culture is no longer a riddle to us. It must present to us the struggle between Eros and Death, between the instincts of life and the instincts of destruction, as it works itself out in the human species." The death instinct, under the influence of Eros, is extraverted and becomes aggression. Civilization is a huge detour constructed by Eros so as to make the death instinct take the long way home.

*There are important variations in Freud's formulations of his metapsychology. Thus, he seems to say at times that the sexual instinct too is conservative, and that it too aims at death. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* he makes use of the myth in Plato's *Symposium* of an original hermaphroditic nature which split into male and female, so that living matter, through sex, seeks a primordial unity.

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Civilization tries to disarm the aggressive instinct by directing it against the ego, by making it over into the "super-ego" whose aggression against the ego takes the form of "conscience." This tension between the ego and the super-ego results in the sense of guilt, which while possibly neurotic by the absolute standard of Rational Man, is a normal quality of the human animal in the state of civilization. "The price of progress in civilization is paid in forfeiting happiness through the heightening of the sense of guilt."

Men who are loyal to the truths of Reason are doomed by their very natures to unhappiness. Happiness (but not *true* happiness, not happiness in the *truth*) is available only to those—the immense majority—who cannot face the truth of man's condition, who live with and by illusions, illusions of God, salvation, and the world to come. Freud's metapsychology concedes no more truth to religion than did his psychology. His "mythology" is a rational one. It is a mythology of rational despair.

THE present attempts to wed a vulgarized psychoanalysis to a vulgarized religiosity are certain to fail: between the two parties is stretched the sword of truth, and both are pledged to keep their backs to it. Sooner or later, the world will perceive the lineaments of frustration and will know that the union was never fully consummated. But this marital catastrophe is not inevitable—all the mates have to do is, acting together in full consciousness, stealthily to remove the sword of truth and hide it under the bed.

Oddly enough, it is only on the late-Freudian foundation of rational despair that psychoanalysis can be "reconciled" with religion —but at a price, a price that Freud, with his intense personal loyalty to the truth, could never pay. For there are a few men, very few, who are willing to look at life boldly as a bleak prelude to death, and at civilization as an enormous distraction from self-extinction. These men submit to the truths of Reason, because in them Reason is the master of the instincts and not its slave. But in the great mass of men, it is the opposite: Reason is the toy of instinct and happiness in untruth is preferred to truth.

If God does not exist, and if religion is an illusion that the majority of men cannot live without, then psychoanalysis and religion can be "reconciled"—if that is what one wishes—by the simple expedient of a double standard of truth. Let men believe in the lies of religion since they cannot do without them, and let the handful of sages, who know the truth and can live with it, keep it among themselves. Men are then divided into the wise and the foolish, the philosophers and the common men, and atheism becomes a guarded, esoteric doctrine—for if the illusions of religion were to be discredited, there is no telling with what madness men would be seized, with what uncontrollable anguish. It would indeed become the duty of the wise publicly to defend and support religion, even to call the police power to its aid, while reserving the truth for themselves and their chosen disciples.

Psychoanalysis itself, which assumes religion to be an illusion, would become a form of esoteric wisdom, and the psychoanalyst would, with regard to dreams, agree with Maimonides: "Persons whose mental capacity is not fully developed, and who have not attained intellectual perfection, must not take any notice of them."

Such a program is bound to sound unpleasant in the ears of 20th-century Americans, though it does have the advantage of enabling many to do what they seem to want to do: to drive in two directions at once, in pursuit of peace-of-mind at any cost and in pursuit of rational truth. But, of course, there is always the further possibility that the truth is not with Freud and Reason, but with God, and that men *can* live in this truth and find their happiness—simply living in it, though it be a scandal to Reason. "Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men."

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AN EVENING WITH ISRAEL'S POETS

Creative Voices in a Time of Trouble

HERBERT HOWARTH

"THESE people can teach us how to live," said Bill Williams to me in an aside after dinner. "They get a new blow every day, curfews, assaults, searches, yet still they go on extracting good out of life."

Some of us were guests at a party at Hemda's. The evening was advancing. We sat round in a large ring, our dinner heavy in us, warmed by the lights and the friendliness.

There was not much to talk about. We had not been brought together as people who wanted to talk to each other. Bill Williams started to sing, softly and persuasively, mustering his Welsh sweetness. It was the day after his speech at the Moghrabi Theater when he had jumped up, unannounced, and told in Hebrew how he, like other administrators, was ashamed of the administration's policy, how he could not sleep at nights for it, how he would do all in his power to further illegal immigration. The magic of that moment was still on him.

He was singing the poem that Rachel made when she was dying of tuberculosis on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. She had loved a labor leader, and he had loved her, but when he learned of her illness, he had married someone else, and she wrote bitter poems:

The other is with him in the light
Before the face of the people—
I only in the dark, the empty shadow.

She compared herself to Mikhal, who was neglected by David for ten years while he was fickle with all women, yet she loved him passionately and constantly. Then in the last days, with the sun changing the colors of the Galilee water every declining minute, she invoked her past:

Did it all happen?—
Did I go out with the morning star
And work the earth with sweat of my hands?—
O my Galilee, Galilee of my soul. . . .

Bill sang it with its simple, longing melody. No one murmured. A sadness came on me; I looked into the infinite ravines of man's hunger to help man; with a mind as night-soft as tears I remembered the words of T. E. Lawrence, his sense of the dedicated desolation of those "who give their lives to an alien people."

Next they looked at me and I recited Yeats, one of the few poems I still remembered whole, for poems were already beginning to disintegrate in my memory, except a few, like Shelley's "Indian Serenade" learned at the very threshold of adolescence. Some parts of "A Woman Young and Old" were with me still, and I began:

What lively lad most pleasured me?

HERBERT HOWARTH is a young English poet who served with the British administration in Palestine from 1943 to 1945, when he resigned in protest against his government's policy. The evening described here took place in 1945; Mr. Howarth's resignation from the British Palestine administration had caused quite a stir, and this night of poetry was one of the ways in which the Jews of Tel Aviv thanked him for his solidarity with them. Mr. Howarth was born in Blackpool, England, in 1917. He has published a book of translations from the Arabic, *Images from the Arab World*. From 1946 to late last year he was employed in the London office of the Jewish Agency. The article published here forms the last chapter of Mr. Howarth's still unpublished account of his experience in Palestine called *Once in Israel*.

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and held my voice at a subdued feminine pitch through to

But when our soul, this body off,
Naked to naked goes. . . .

Sara, blond and insipid, yet a dancer who should have known better, laughed out loud, fantastically. Then the beautifully fair, blue-eyed Musgrave suddenly began to recite in French. Looking down at his feet like a schoolboy, using the deep vibrating uncontrolled tones of a schoolboy, he recited. Emotion brimmed in him, both for the sake of the poem, and for the act of being un-English and speaking emotion aloud. We sat silent and listened. Eight months later he was dead, his ambitions and his beauty were under the rubble of the King David explosion. It is not only England who kills her friends. Perhaps it is inherent in the structure of love for a people that those who most love a land die in it and from it.

Shortly after ten o'clock I went downstairs. Some days earlier, in the Tamar Café, Arieh Lerner and the poetess Bat-Miriam had arranged that the poets in Tel Aviv should call a sort of concilium for a farewell meeting with me before my departure for England.

"All right," I said, flipping through my diary. "About ten o'clock next Thursday night."

Bat-Miriam showed a faint look of alarm, but corrected it quickly. The "Bohemian" doctrine has still not died out among Palestine writers and artists. When I said we would start at ten, Bat-Miriam assumed that I was a subscriber to it, and I did not tell her the awful truth that, like most English writers, I was a respectable sleep-hoarder and normality-merchant.

WHEN the evening came I was naturally loath to go. Again in conformity with English practice. Some relics of the past like Larry Durrell keep up a sort of salon habit, but most people who feel about art are terrified of salons. Just as Lasker-Schüler was. I felt that real poetry is not in the salon, but in the sort of room I was leaving, where it comes out suddenly by itself from springs of natural sentiment. It never came in a salon, where each person posed, pretended, dissimulated out of fear of the others. So I began by leaving Hemda's too late, and then manufactured various excuses for not getting to Bat-Miriam's, such as forgetting the address or not being able to locate it.

But Minna found me. Gentle and loyal and good, and no one else cared for me so unselfishly as she did, she guided me towards the house. Not because she wanted to force the *soirée* on me, but because she did not want the people there to talk badly of me for letting them down.

Rather bare stone stairs link the apartments in Tel Aviv's blocks of flats. We found our way up a stone flight to Bat-Miriam's. As we were later even than Tel Aviv usually is (it prides itself on unpunctuality), the large drawing room was already full when we entered. Some famous faces glowed up—Shlonsky with his long mane of hair fluffed back as though a barber's drying fan had been blowing on it; the queenly oval of Rovina's features; the witch-like intelligence of Malkah Locker. There were gaps, too. "Where's Alterman?" I murmured to Arieh Lerner. "O, he's such a prima donna," said Arieh apologetically. I was hurt for a minute; perhaps some of the other people in that room will last when Nathan Alterman is forgotten, but for this generation Alterman is the spokesman and singer; and I had worked lovingly on the translation of his political tirade against Attlee, which Erich Winter had given me, and his poem about the "Elephants of Heaven" that Ofra and Zuriha had taught me in a chance meeting one Saturday night in a coffee house.

"And where's Uri Zvi?" The poets in the room belonged chiefly to the Left, and so apparently they had been unable to invite the passionate red-haired man whose laments for Europe, verse howling on verse, were to fill the literary supplements of *Haaretz* through the coming year. His head and long, thin frame look as if chiselled out of a filament of brass; the ginger freckles and the ginger

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lashes over astigmatic eyes say that fire consumed him, scorched away all dross; he is a man blazing away, yet miraculously renewed after each poem. In the idyllic days when Palestine set out on her journey he wrote the lyrics of *Anacreon's Pool;* today after the war and the six million Jewish dead, he writes of the Gentiles draining their bloody goblets and the mantle of Elijah flagellating the air.

Shlonsky had already drunk a good deal, according to his regular Homeric practice. He threw his arms round me and took me over to a settee. I found myself shyly wedged between Orland and Leah Goldberg. I had never met Orland before. He was young and good-looking. A runic riddle started running in my head, and I remembered it was a verse of his that Ofra had taught me:

Many a note I played
And never a note understood
But the note I understood
I never knew how to play.

He was quiet amid the bacchanal, had a sort of Oxford restraint, and it was easy to sit by him and to "rest in oneself," while waiting to see how the evening would go.

Bat-Miriam got up. She had already been standing but all the same she now quite distinctly got up, partly because the other people sat down, and partly because she rose in herself, deliberately sloughed off the skin of daily intercourse and bade the priestess emerge. Just as the Sybil grew greater when she prophesied. She read from her poem, "The Land of Israel," about the puzzlement of Palestine:

Your falling wing crowns the penumbra
Of city, mountain, and desert place.
And my hurricane longings are gathered
To the rainbow of your hidden face.

I cannot grasp you, o disclosing-disappearing,
You never will be wholly understood.
And I shall stand like a frozen question
With your sorrow written on my blood. . . .

Then, with no transition, she proceeded in the same high, reedy, inspired Hebrew to speak a commentary to us, about ourselves, about the fact of our unity that evening in troubled Palestine, our unity, being English and Jewish people mixed, as poets and lovers of poetry, who summon the nations to judge not by expediency but according to human rights. "All the nations in all their languages are telling the same story and singing of one ultimate purpose. Those who truly decipher that purpose and who are therefore the consecrated bearers of the Word are the poets. O ancient believers . . . we can inspire one another, we are being inspired by one another. . . ."

She wilted, shrivelled, retreated into the husk of daily behavior. Shlonsky asked us all to drink, and led us. Then he pointed at a short stout man, who up to that moment had been inconspicuously intent on projecting himself on to a beautiful girl in a window seat.

MENASHE LEVIN turned towards the room, and as he began to speak, in a quiet concentrated French, I saw that under the smooth corpulence of his face there was an active critical faculty which constantly kept watch in the dark of the flesh. Modern Hebrew poetry and mysticism he talked of. "Everyone knows how the Golem lay in the loft of the synagogue in Prague. That great cumbersome frame, its limbs so heavy that had one foot been lifted it would, when replaced, have smitten the floor like a sledgehammer and shaken the foundations of the houses. Was not the Hebrew language like that for two thousand years? It lay inert. It awaited a time when spirit would be breathed into it, when a divine propulsion would be in its sinews and make light of the magnitude of its parts. When we Jews began to come back to Palestine that time began. The Hebrew poetry of the first generations of immigrants, the poetry of masters like Bialik and Tchernachovsky, who were born in the old world of persecution but came to live and die in the new world of our autonomy, represents the first stirrings of

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the Golem as it wakes. Now it is moving about the roof of the temple and breaking the hasps of the hatch. Perhaps not we, but our children will see it in the streets, rushing in the sunshine.

"I have not accidentally chosen this image of the Golem to define where we are. It is one of the dominant images of popular Jewish mysticism; and mysticism is inextricably woven with our poetry and our whole cultural achievement, even with Marx and the old guard of revolutionaries like Radek. During the centuries of exile little of life—little of the joy of life—was vouchsafed to us. From the meagerness of our portion of joy we became excessively afraid of death. Each of us felt it intolerable that life should wither to its end with our deprivation uncompensated. Why should we be cut off from the loveliness which we had inherited equally with all souls on earth? The wide dispersion of these feelings, the signs of which you may see today in the despair with which a Jewish family mourns death in the face of all the comforts of religion, puts Jewish mysticism on a much broader, more popular basis than with other peoples. The mysticism of the Zohar and Cabala is essentially the same as the mysticism of Tao or the Upanishads, but the latter was confined to the few disciples who could prevail upon themselves to undergo the disciplines whose voluntary rigors were the index of restrictionism and exclusivity. Among the Jews of the Exile the high general level of alertness combined with the effects of the visible discrimination of Gentile majorities against Jewish minorities to produce energetic mysticism throughout every coherent group. The exceptions in a Jewish community in the Exile were the non-mystics; the Orthodox clergy, for example, who fought against this spontaneous cultural growth. While the eyes of the people ranged the horizons for the Messiah, a rabbi like Jochanan would declare, 'When the Messiah comes, I will not know him.' If the coming of the Messiah meant freedom and joy, it also meant the struggle to obtain these things under his banner, and that meant bloodshed and convulsions. Religion could not but turn away. But the people saw the joy beyond the struggle, and so they let the flower of belief grow in their hearts.

"Here is the secret of the poetry we are writing. We who are using Hebrew are still the voice of the people. We were bred in their mysticism and its human faith."

"You call us poets of Jewish mysticism," said Shlonsky, taking over from him. "Let me read you a poem I wrote yesterday. Maybe it comes from our national mystique, maybe just from a Tel Aviv delirium. Last night I was on a bus going down the boulevard near the new Habimah theater. The orange blossom smells blow in through the breach in the houses there. A verse started shaping in my head. I dropped off the bus, went into a café, and wrote this down."

HE TOOK a small piece of paper from his pocket and looked at it for a moment, running his fingers through his wind-funnel of hair. *"Lo yeuman ke yissuppar"* is a common Hebrew saying: "It can't be believed." One day during Shlonsky's youth, when his hair was twice the cloud it is today, there was a report that he had taken it to a hairdresser to be clipped. The story came to Bialik. *"Lo yeuman ke yissuppar,"* said the old laureate; for the same words also mean in Hebrew "He's no artist if he had a haircut."

Heavy, slow, orchestral trochees. Shlonsky, on his feet now, spoke them like an actor, mining in them for their sorrow, for their depth of weariness:

Blowing corn, and thorn, turning air
And night. Night, with blowing seeds.
Forgive us, king, our base desire,
Give us release.

We burn to wander, wander, wander.
Your command is stay.
We resent. And we conspire.
Be hard on our dishonesty.

Force us stop, Force us rest.
Enforce us. We are close to fear.
Fields of seed. Corn in the air.
And night, night, and quietness.

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What a prayer, a prayer of supplication to God for leave to do penance! It is the conscience of Tel Aviv speaking. We are two hundred thousand in Tel Aviv, it seems to say. We came to this land to remake it, and to do that we should plunge our own hands into the soil and sweat as Anda Pinkerfeld did, and as the boys and girls of the farms do today. Why are we idling in the town? The Gentiles compelled our fathers to be townsmen for years, and our longing for Palestine was mixed with the longing to be in the open, to go to the earth again and roll with it in natural harmony. We poets who stay in the town are demented. Above all others we should know that happiness does not come from idleness. It comes from the immersion of self in sacrifice for a purpose.

So it is, after all, a poem of the Jewish mystique, Shlonsky, I thought. It is a poem of guilt, a poem promising expiation. But I did not say it, for Shlonsky had begun to talk his own commentary, with a different exegesis.

"OURS is a poetry of mysticism," Shlonsky said. "But if we call it that, the world will not understand us. There is much poetry of mysticism in the generally accepted category, but little of it is similar to our work. You will tell an Englishman that we are mystics, and he will think of the burning heart of St. Theresa. And thus he will never understand us. For Jewish mysticism is born out of suffering, but Catholic mysticism is often born out of the desire to suffer. Perhaps we have more in common with the Arab heretics, whose mysticism is the product of oppression. Yet still there is a difference, for Arab mysticism stems from the minority, while ours springs from the corporate body of the people. So in order the better to define ourselves to a world which certainly will not help unless it has begun to understand us, let us abnegate the use of the word mysticism; let us confess simply that we write Poetry of Trouble. We have no option but to write it, if we write at all.

"Look at the output of our friend Alterman. He chose not to be here tonight. We can talk about him the more candidly. He writes two different sorts of poetry. But they differ only in a literary sense. In their social origins they are equally specimens of Trouble Poetry.

He winds himself into a state of mental intoxication and when the intellectual selective faculties are suspended he links beautiful word to beautiful word, without coherence but every one a jewel or a tear. We know that he is under no compulsion to be unintelligent in order to be beautiful. He is not a man who chooses nonsense because he lacks sense. When there is safe material to hand—note that word 'safe'—he is as much a master of rational beauty as Racine, whose *Phèdre* he translated into Hebrew with such austere perfection. So the hubble-bubble of these surrealist verses of his—these elephants of heaven that Howarth loves—plainly confers some advantage on him. Like music in imperial Vienna, it confers the power of evading censorship.

"Alterman's second type of poetry is always at the mercy of the censor. He wrote one day a celestial satire about the ways of a certain high commissioner. Where is that? A skeleton in a censor's cupboard, I believe. But sometimes the censor holds his hand, and all the people sing his satires. The history of our nation today has been inscribed by Alterman in the poem *Davar* published last week, about the refugee child who has been hushed out of Europe through danger after danger and at last on these shores of home asks 'May I cry now?' Poetry of trouble, poetry of all our trouble is what Alterman is writing. His obscure poetry tells the same tale as his open satires, except that perhaps it resists, from the humane artistic point of view, our own internal party censorship as well as the censorship of the non-Jewish administration.

"There is a relationship between poetry and morals that is not incidental. The world saw it in France during the war. The greatest of the French poets fought in the underground. They sustained the soul of France. Our Jewish struggle has been fought for age on age in the underground of the lands from

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the pitiful ghetto regions of Little Russia to the tenements of New York. It looks as if we cannot yet come to the surface today in our national home. We fight. And every one of us artists confronts a dilemma: what is the most urgent imperative on me—to go down to the beach and bring in an illegal immigrant or to write a poem? If we choose to write a poem, that choice means that we still have faith—faith after the infinite disillusionments—in the conscience of the nations. They will read our poems, they will behold our troubles in the mirror of the words, they will link their souls with the soul of Palestine in the name of whatever may be beautiful in the society of tomorrow."

A strange family, the Shlonskys, as wholly artist as the romantic families of the Brontë age sometimes were. His sister Vardina, who knew no English, was stranded in England at the onset of the blitz. She was billeted on two maiden ladies, Christian Scientists, in a wealthy but empty, echoing foreign house at Bedford. Days passed in which she hardly spoke. Then the post brought her a sheaf of new poems from her brother. Their difficult Hebrew and abstruse images cried with the clarity of a remembered voice to her out of far Palestine. She set them to music, and Palestine tingles in the music: "*Ba-leila*—in the evening. . . ." All is expiated; in Tel Aviv as in the Emek you have redeemed yourself. You have deserved your evening and its pulse of love.

Shlonsky came over and wedged himself onto the settee and hugged me. Leah Goldberg had been displaced by his insertion of himself, and he waved her over to the chair he had previously occupied and told her it was her turn to recite.

TALL, thin, unlovely, but her eyes refined and sad in their slightly hyper-thyroid magnitude, and her carriage elegant. There is a whimsical observation in her poems, a power of seeing the sorrows of men and animals from new angles.

I am twenty-two. Not beautiful.
The bridges of the unworld lead me
Beyond this smoke, this faint café curl
Of voices that say, and eyes that see, all,
All except me, to the grasses and poppies
And the pollen mottling of the spring coppice.

Gentila Lebel told me that when she was small she and a friend used to go to her father's editorial office at *Davar* and rummage through his wastepaper basket for rejected manuscripts of Leah Goldberg's poems. They read and fed on them. For the Jewish woman in them. For the haunted person behind the dilated eyes.

When Malkah Locker began speaking it sounded at first like a protest against the style that Leah Goldberg and Shlonsky had used in their poems. The poetry of the Symbolists, she said, can only be construed, now that we see it in historical perspective, as the expression of their terror and bewilderment at the coming of the industrial age. From Baudelaire and Wagner onward, the imagery got more out of hand as the 19th century proceeded. Where did the progressive confusion lead?

In 1939 Valéry was sitting with a group of Swiss intellectuals. One told the story of Hitler and Einstein. Hitler said that he would honor Einstein as a scientist but put him to death for the propagation of false ethics. Einstein's comment on this verdict was that he had gained his place in science by effort and labor, Hitler had gained his place in politics through the stupidity of his people. "Yes—through mine too," said Valéry.

That condemnation of a poetry for which the image had become the sole point of interest, Malkah Locker endorsed. And she swung now into line with Shlonsky and said that poetry must get back in touch with the ethics it had lost.

In her own early poems the moral is hard to trace. Her Yiddish poem about Vienna is simply a composite of scenes and associations common to all of us who think around the name of the city: the cathedral bells, the Danube, the Turks at the gates, Schubert, the ferns on the slopes, the *Rosenkavalier*. But since 1940 she had been at work (she

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began to tell us about it, disclosing it for the first time) on a volume that is, in effect, a long Kaddish. The Kaddish is the prayer recited daily for a year after the funeral of a parent by his son: perhaps the child is four or five, and his shrill treble, vocalizing words the sense of which is unknown to him, contrasts with the chorus of elder voices like a bleak and tragic obbligato. Her volume is a prayer commemorating the Jewish deaths in Europe. Night—she sits on a rock drinking night. Shrivelling—she is shrivelled, the cells for pregnancy under the green are dried. The forests of Poland—all shout, and the light shouts, like a prosecutor, "Guilty." She says—is not mankind conscious of its guilt, its blood-share in the massacre of the millions in Europe?

There was a pause when she had finished. Tel Aviv does not often speak of its losses. Something of its feverish exaltation of mood even arises from the determination not to dwell on the thought of the dead. It will build to avenge them, to provide shelter for those of their children who survive. But how dare it think about them? If a man and his wife stayed at home alone in the evening the memory and the grief would overtake them, and they would be shattered under the impact of the irrecoverable. That is why the streets are full in the twilight. That is why silence is rare in Tel Aviv—to ward off memory. Yet silence fell and no one intervened for a moment.

THEN a murmur of voices. They were asking Rovina to go forward. Till that time she had unpretentiously sat at the back of the room. She did not make them press her long, but came across the carpet with slow thoughtful dignity. I thought, as I had thought a score of times that year, how great Rovina was, not just as an actress but in life. A nation that has no traditional monarchy to personify its hopes tends to create a king or queen out of the material each age gives. Jewish Palestine has chosen Rovina. On the stage, dominating Habimah, she weeps and rages. They tell the story that when Vachtangov built up the company in Moscow, Rovina, then a provincial school-teacher, came to him for an audition, and that he was unimpressed and inclined to refuse her; she began to weep, and suddenly he looked at her and shouted, "Yes, weep. Go on weeping like that"; and because she could greatly weep, took her. On the stage she keeps the tears, as she can hardly help but do, so much is Habimah's repertoire the restatement of Jewish persecution in many places and times; but in life she has ennobled all the weeping and infused the grief with the indignant self-respect of the new Palestine.

She stood against the wall, her height increased by the long black evening gown she was wearing, and she clasped her hands under her chin in thought.

Then she tilted her head to the light, and its dignity and oval length softened as she uttered the opening lines of Gnessin's poem, "The Kiss":

And should he return from wandering and come to my country
I shall be at peace.
And should he visit my mother's house and I see his face,
See his face once more,
I shall be at peace.

And should he look on me—
Even though he look on me and on the hiding place of my soul as he used to,
With his far-off pity and the great sadness of a man's soul—
I shall take on a sullen calm as a soldier takes his baldrick.
And should he extend his hand in greeting
I shall accept his hand in greeting
I shall calmly accept his large hand—
His warm hand which has and disclaims security—
And there shall be no remembrance of my hand's silly trembling.
I shall be at peace.

But should my fortune be that he visits my house and lies here at night
With me in the shade of one rafter, my mother's house,

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I will get up in the quiet night and quietly
grope and on the tip of my naked toes
Find his bed in the dark—
And stretched before me, held in sleep's void
flask,
His limbs moving with joy of the rest that
embraces him
He will not recognize, will feel nothing, his
soul will not dream of me there.

I shall bend and kiss him on the chest
I shall quietly draw the blanket fringe and
kiss his chest
And the kiss the kiss of one who murders a
soul.
I shall drink his blood in this kiss!

And the blood will be mine to quench my
thirst
It will be balm to still the desire of my sick
lonely soul
Howling like a young she-wolf wracked for
love,
And pressing the stones of silence,
A terrified soul on a brazier
For Love's kiss which was never kissed
From the day she started to thirst and expect
the sun
Till she withered. . . .

There are songs of Schubert's in which, after the voice has been detained on a long-held note, he raises the same syllable on to another note which is the first of a new phrase of melody; and in a parallel way Rovina held us all, at the close of her poem, in a long tense pause and then carried the emotion of the pause, on to the first word of a poem of another nature, a ringing, challenging, bitter, pleading poem, one of the great addresses to England written by Alterman during these fateful months of waiting we had just undergone:

We are sisters, Albion, we Jews and you.
We shall play
A match from coast to coast. You unhitch
your sword
For the old match, the old game. A kind
of commerce
Between the pursuer nation and the pursued.
So it is. You will inflict pain on us,
And we on you—unforgettable shame.
So it is. You will number our wounds
But their rottenness will be yours. . . .
With persecution you will renew our youth
And the persecution will bring the age-old
horror on you.

These thoughts were the thoughts of all Israel then.

Shlonsky suddenly dropped his boar-like roar of intoxication and was sober as he stood up. He lifted his hands over all of us. He said: "We have met here as poets and writers, musicians and painters." He turned to me and concluded, "Those in England with whom we share one profession should know that we have no existence without Palestine, we cannot write or make without Palestine."

That is their message. Only it withholds a part of the truth, the part that would tell of their courage in persistently creating while they fight, and fighting while they create, and of the victories they win for beauty even while they are defeated. They breathe the wind of freedom in their nostrils; on the mountains of Gilboa the light comes up fresh; and "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive."

"TEL AVIV has been all comfort to me," I thought, walking through the dark streets after the reception. "And in resigning my job for the sake of Tel Aviv, I have in fact resigned its comforts—have ordered, as it were, my exile from it.

"Perhaps all the rest of my life I shall long to be here again. To have these manifold delights again.

"Just because I loved it I had to give it up. Love has no meaning if you are not prepared to sacrifice so that the loved object may continue to exist.

"And the paradox wreathes into further complications, since I had to give up my love for the sake of another love, love for my own people. And this prior love, too, I could only show through criticism instead of embrace."

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THE CONSPIRATORS

A Story

JULIUS HORWITZ

THE three people, the young man, his wife and Mrs. Grady, hurried along the empty dark street talking about God, his blessing and power. They had only met an hour ago through the mutual introduction of Mrs. Fletcher in her flat on Christopher Street but already they had established that curious bond that makes it possible for people to speak openly and honestly to one another.

"I get some holy water from the Father to put in the cupboard. What do you do?"

He didn't know what "he did." A hazy forced remembrance swept over him of friends and relatives and old neighbors invited to the new house, of people surging through inspecting all of the rooms, a great deal of drinking, big open cornbeef sandwiches, salami, pickles, cake, bread his mother had baked, cases of pop and beer cooling off in the bathtub, loud talk and dancing. "We have parties," he told Mrs. Grady, "and the people all bring us gifts for the new house, stuff themselves with food, and get a little drunk." Mrs. Grady laughed but that wasn't a real answer for her.

"Don't you do anything for good luck?"

He remembered that his mother used to put salt, no, not salt but a piece of bread in the cupboard. That was the custom brought over from Russia, to put a piece of bread in the cupboard, the first piece of bread to enter the new house. And that piece of bread was to protect you and make your home a blessing for all the days of your life. And for Mrs. Grady there was a little holy water stored up in a bottle on the top shelf.

"Your God tells you to use bread. My God tells me to use holy water. Ain't it a crazy world? But I'll tell you something, Kids, you can't always trust God. I know. That's why I want to help you Kids out. We've got to help each other, don't we!"

HE DIDN'T know what to say in answer to Mrs. Grady. It's seldom that one finds oneself talking about God as though he existed in the flesh and watched over us like a kind father. He thought for a minute of all the arguments he had listened to about the existence of God during four years of college. Now that school was over for him and he was faced with the more serious problem of finding an apartment and putting to use his knowledge, he seldom had occasion to talk about God. He felt for a minute like really extending the argument with Mrs. Grady. Why does God tell you to use holy water, why does he tell me to use bread? But he knew that he couldn't reach the face-to-face depth of Mrs. Grady in an argument about God. God just wasn't a fundamental issue for him.

Mrs. Grady wouldn't have understood for a minute what was going on in the young man's head but she did know that tonight she was out on an adventure and the excitement of the idea aroused her. It was really possible to feel yourself alive, reaching to help other people, to collect events all around you. And you could do all of this without getting drunk. All gin could do was to make you drunk enough so that you could stand in the hallway of your tenement building and scream at the top of your voice for your dead husband Harry to come back from the grave and take care of you and sleep with

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JULIUS HORWITZ's story "A Cup of Tea" appeared in the September 1949 COMMENTARY. Mr. Horwitz, who was born in Cleveland, Ohio in 1920, has been writing radio scripts and working on a series of short stories about Manhattan.

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you and give you little girls who could walk straight. The gin could make you forget the two little girls who had died and the five kids who remained alive after Harry was laid away in the ground in a soldier's pauper grave. But the gin couldn't make you feel alive. Mrs. Grady knew that she had to sum up her feelings.

"I'm going to help you Kids because I know that you need help. Mrs. Fletcher told me all about the rat hole you're living in now. It ain't fit for Kids like you. You need help. You're Jewish. I'm Irish. So what? We all need help, don't we? And I don't want you to think that you have to pay me for the place. I won't take a penny. I'm telling you right now, I won't take a penny."

He listened in amazement. It just wasn't real. Weren't all the cheap bastards getting two to three hundred dollars for cold-water flats and didn't you have to pay off the supers or else buy a houseful of furniture that wasn't worth a dime? He looked at his wife and she gave him the look he expected. She couldn't believe it either. She was thinking of the kitchen. The place they were headed for had a kitchen. A large kitchen, Mrs. Grady had said. And there was a stove in the kitchen that had three burners and an oven. She could cook! The talk about God had slipped past her. She only knew that there was a possibility that before the night was over they might have a three-room apartment with a kitchen where she could cook and store utensils and do all of the things she couldn't do since her marriage.

THE west wind from the Hudson River quickened their pace. They were now approaching the big tenement buildings that had been thrown up around the turn of the century to house Irish workers who had given up their homes in Ireland to spend their days in cold, dark, crowded flats.

"That's the building over there," Mrs. Grady said. "Nobody's awake at this hour. They only stay up late on Friday nights. If you move in at one o'clock in the morning everything will be all right. Frankie and some of his friends moved me out at two in the morning. Nobody saw us and nobody heard us. The super still thinks I'm living in the flat. You've got nothing to worry about, Kids, you'll come out all right. If anybody says anything to you, you can say you're my niece and nephew. Can't I have a Jewish nephew?"

If you move in at one in the morning. He tried to think out what the phrase meant. But he couldn't. They still had to see the rooms. To walk up the stairs. To test the toilet. To see the light connections. To look for the cockroaches. To worry about painting. And light. And air.

They stopped in front of the building. Mrs. Grady showed her nervousness. If she was caught in the empty flat the super might complain to the renting agent that she had vacated the flat and they would throw a padlock on the door.

"There's nothing to be afraid of, Kids," she said, "just walk up the stairs like you're visiting a couple of friends."

The hallway was long and dark. The stairs were wooden. They mounted the stairs and began the long climb to the fifth floor.

"The only good thing about living up so high is the roof in the summertime. And you don't get any noise. It's nice in the summertime," Mrs. Grady explained. These were the steps she had climbed up and down for seventeen years. Her own mother had lived on the third floor until the day she died. She had climbed these stairs seven times pregnant. Twice she had held a wake. Oh, the stories she could tell.

The young wife withdrew into herself. Maybe having a kitchen wasn't such a wonderful idea after all. They could go on living in a furnished room until the housing situation let up. People were always finding apartments. They could cut corners a little and pay a little more rent. They could put off having a baby. They could try a little harder to find a place to live. Her husband was a veteran. Veterans had a certain kind of preference. They could find a place out of the city. The subways traveled fast. It didn't make any difference where they lived.

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Didn't other people find places to live? Didn't they find rooms open and above board so that they could hire a moving van, sweep out their rooms, wash the windows, hang up curtains without being afraid. . . .

He saw immediately that the place was a firetrap. The hallways stunk of flooded toilets. If there was a God, he wanted to say to Mrs. Grady, would he permit us to sneak into our own home like a couple of thieves. He didn't say it because he knew how crazy it would sound. Why talk about God? Wasn't this a problem for people who wanted to change the face of the earth? Mrs. Grady brought him back to reality.

"This is the apartment, Kids, let's go in."

The door opened into the kitchen. The room was bare except for the stove. The sudden light startled the roaches.

"You've got to see the place with furniture in mind," Mrs. Grady tried to explain. "It doesn't look like anything this way." But she knew they were disappointed. She felt that she would have been disappointed herself if she had been twenty years younger and looking at the first available apartment that had come up in over two years. It was a shameful place to live. And especially for a nice young couple. They would have no bathtub and would have to share a toilet in the hallway. And she looked like such a clean young girl—somebody used to taking a shower every morning and brushing her teeth in a white toilet. But what could she do? The place was vacant and she was willing to give it to them. And they wouldn't have to pay a penny for the apartment. It was still her apartment and she could do anything that she wanted to do with it. Didn't she pay rent on it for over seventeen years? What could people do? You've got to make your own bed. They were young kids. They could fix up the place. Maybe they could find a better place to live in after awhile. The rent was cheap, they could cook and it was better than living in a lousy little furnished room. They could make the place look like something. And didn't Frankie just finish painting the place a nice sea-green? And wasn't the kitchen painted a new white? She and Harry had lived here. They had had seven kids. What difference does it make where you live?

The husband and wife looked at one another. How could they move in? How could they get the heart to sneak in their belongings at one o'clock in the morning?

"You've got nothing to worry about, Kids," Mrs. Grady told them. "Everybody is doing it. How do you think people like us get apartments? We've got to help each other. If I had just let the place go, the renting agent would be getting sixty dollars a month for this hole. And then where would you be? I tell you that everybody in this house is living under somebody else's name. It's the only way we can live now with high rents and no place to move to."

She was right. They both knew it. There was no place else to go. That was reality.

"Your friends will help. Just like my friends helped me sneak-move into my new place. We've got to keep helping each other."

Mrs. Grady knew they would take the place and she was happy. People who needed help were taking over the flat. It wouldn't go to the landlord. For the past eight days she had been frantic lest the apartment slip out of her hands when the rent came due. It wasn't the apartment so much as getting back at the landlord. Didn't he tell her to get out in the street with her little girl, who was just out of the hospital, if she didn't like living in three rooms. Didn't the doctor warn her that her little girl would crack up again unless she found an apartment with steam heat, a bathtub, and a private toilet. Didn't she bury two little girls already. Didn't she bury Harry in a soldiers' pauper grave. Didn't the landlord give a four-room apartment that had become vacant to somebody who could spend sixty dollars a month while she walked the streets half-crazy trying to find a bigger place to live. Oh if Harry could have only been alive tonight to see the way she acted.

Her dead soldier husband would have been proud of her.

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HITLER AND THE GYPSIES

The Fate of Europe's Oldest Aryans

DORA E. YATES

IT IS more than time that civilized men and women were aware of the Nazi crime against the Gypsies, as well as the Jews. Both bear witness to the fantastic dynamic of the 20th-century racial fanaticism. For these two peoples shared the horror of martyrdom at the hands of the Nazis for no other reason than that they *were*—they *existed.*

The Gypsies, like the Jews, stand alone in the history of the world as an isolated race; both are, seemingly, miraculous survivals. Each of them has handed down its customs and traditions from generation to generation, as well as an ancient mother-tongue unknown to other peoples: the Jews, Hebrew, and the Gypsies, Romani. Throughout the ages both these peoples have been persecuted unmercifully: the Jews ostensibly because of the steadfastness with which they clung to their faith and because of their economic successes, and the Gypsies for exactly opposite reasons: because of their supposed want of religion and their aloofness and poverty.

IN THE Dark Ages both groups were subjected to the rack and wheel for preserving their own traditions and refusing to intermarry with the Gentiles. Anti-Gypsy legislation existed from about 1500 to 1800 CE in several countries of Europe (except Hungary and the Southeast), but in Spain and France it became a dead letter, and in England and Italy was seldom enforced. In point of severity there is little to choose between these laws, though those promulgated in Germany were more numerous than in other countries and perhaps somewhat more barbarous. By the 18th century, however, we are told (*Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society,* Third Series), "even the German conscience began to prick German writers: one was at great pains to justify inhumanity, another could not think without shuddering about 'the old, helpless, perhaps quite innocent Gypsy woman who was buried alive'; and a third asks 'What judge would without judgment and right send a man to be hung who was guilty of no particular crime, but simply because he belonged to a particular race?'"

Before the close of the 18th century, such specific anti-Gypsy legislation had come to an end. The Romanis in Europe were left, more or less, to pursue their normal nomadic life, unharassed by any restrictions except the vagrancy laws and frontier regulations. Throughout the 19th and the first three decades of the 20th centuries, they earned their living by their own traditional occupations and handicrafts. In Bulgaria Gypsy men plied the trades of tinkers, comb-makers, iron-workers, gimlet-makers, spoon-makers, sieve-makers, and carpet-weavers, or reared the buffaloes by which their traveling carts were drawn. In Serbia smithcraft was considered the noblest occupation for the Romani; while in Turkey Turkish Gypsies sank so low in the social scale that they accepted employment as common hangmen. Many sedentary Gypsies in Albanian towns were occupied as porters, donkey-drivers,

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AMONG the most poignant episodes in recent history was the extermination of some tens of thousands—we do not even know the approximate figure—of Gypsies by the Nazi terror. Here was German racism run wild, devouring its own myth: one of the oldest Aryan groups in Europe was destroyed because it did not suit Hitler's 20th-century brand of nationalism. In this article DORA E. YATES sets down what is known of the Gypsy fate at the hand of the Nazis. Miss Yates is secretary of the Gypsy Lore Society in London.

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brick- and tile-makers and scavengers, and their women-folk found employment as charwomen. In other countries Gypsy fiddlers played at village weddings and dances; Gypsy horse-dealers and blacksmiths carried on a prosperous trade; old Gypsy women put their extensive medical knowledge and herbal lore at the service of the country folk among whom they dwelt; young Gypsy girls sold flowers in the streets of Bucharest and thereby gave to that capital much of its color and gaiety; and everywhere Gypsy fortune-tellers advised all and sundry as to their future fate.

After the First World War some of the more progressive countries of Eastern Europe tried out various cultural experiments to fit the Gypsies into modern life. At Uzhorod in Czechoslovakia, for instance, a special open-air school was started for Gypsy children, surrounded by a playground enclosed with trees, and the curriculum included drawing, handicrafts, and violin instruction—with the result that this institution became a general cultural center for the entire Gypsy colony and was able to produce a Gypsy theatrical company which was invited to tour the whole of Southern Czechoslovakia. Long before 1939 Gypsies had their own Romani newspapers in Rumania, Yugoslavia, and Soviet Russia, and already there were Gypsy doctors, lawyers, teachers, engineers, priests, and authors of considerable ability.

NO EXACT statistics are obtainable on the distribution of the Gypsies in Europe before the two world wars—their ceaseless migrations from one country to another within Europe itself, and from Europe to Australia and North and South America, make an accurate estimate impossible. But at the beginning of the 20th century Arthur Thesleff and other investigators gave the rough total of 1,422,000. For the present we have no accurate information as to how many have survived Hitler's New Order; but we do know that their losses were extremely heavy.

Hitler revived and exceeded the savagery of the old 17th and 18th century laws against the "Zigeuner." He decreed the wholesale massacre of Gypsies in Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe, for the sole reason that they *were* Gypsies, a race of free men and women. In Germany, before he came into power, tribes of Sinti, Ungri, and Gelderari had wandered peacefully from one village to another, peddling their small wares, mending the kettles and pots and pans of the villagers, and providing the music at their festivities.

The precise date at which Hitler decided on the extermination of Gypsies is unknown to us, but it was obvious that the men and women of this dark-skinned, black-eyed race were not "Nordics." At first Hitler tried to persuade the German professors of ethnography and anthropology to declare that the Gypsies were non-Aryans, and many men of learning were interned for refusing to deny the Indo-Aryan origin of the Romani people and their language. So Hitler and his gangsters then chose to classify the whole race as "asocial"—i.e., a nomadic people who did not fit into his New Order, and a proper object for genocide.

Of the hideous deeds of barbarity towards the Gypsies in Germany itself, we possess no written testimony. But from trustworthy interviews with "Zigeuner" whose relatives were liquidated at the Belsen and other concentration camps, it has been estimated that of the five thousand nomadic Gypsies who roamed the roads of the Reich in 1939, less than seven hundred are alive today.

RELIABLE data on what actually happened in Nazi-occupied countries during the war are naturally difficult to secure. But from the evidence supplied by survivors I will quote two typical examples given by literate Gypsies from Latvia and Czechoslovakia respectively. The first of these is an account written by the Lettish Gypsy, Vanya Kochanowski, a university student who managed eventually to escape into France, "a living skeleton, with no flesh on my bones, but with feet swollen to the size of an elephant's paws."

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"Before 1940," he writes, "life in Latvia was very wonderful. We Gypsies enjoyed absolute freedom and we could live and study as we wished. Anyone who wanted to work could earn a good livelihood, but work was not compulsory. Everyone carried on his own life according to his wishes. Then in 1940 our 'liberators' appeared from the East. Free discussion came to an end . . . but the Soviet government treated us Gypsies well, and although we were obliged to work hard and to attend school or university the Tziganes were satisfied with their régime . . . . But that stage did not last long. The new 'liberators'—the Nazis—were a hundred times worse than any medieval oppressors, and deportations and tortures became the order of the day. All Jews were herded into ghettos and soon the forests near Riga became a veritable charnel-house. . . ."

In Eastern Latvia all the Gypsies were assembled in three towns, Rezekne, Ludza, and Vilane. At Ludza they were locked up in a large synagogue where they died, in hundreds, of hunger and disease. When Kochanowski succeeded in telephoning to Ludza, the only reply he received was: "The Gypsies have already been reported to the forests"—the Nazi code phraseology for "murdered." The bitter protest he then lodged with official Nazi headquarters was met with the retort: "If you cannot prove to me that an adequate number of Gypsies are decent, hard-working folk, you will every one of you be exterminated."

So, with the collaboration of the chief of the Latvian Gypsies, Janis Lejamanis, this young student set to work to compile a register of *"Tziganes honnêtes."* Then, in accordance with the ironic cruelty of the Nazi authorities, who thought the boy had had no education, he was ordered to write a dissertation proving that the Gypsies were Aryans. This, however, he accomplished satisfactorily and in scholarly fashion, giving as his source Miklosich's *Mundarten der Zigeuner in Europa.* At last there came a decree that the Gypsies were not to be liquidated. But the "order of release" was diabolically delayed until it was too late: it arrived at 2 AM, exactly two hours after fifteen to twenty-five hundred Gypsies had been massacred. Kochanowski himself, then a youth of strong physique, was spared, and in 1943 with other Lettish students sent to work for the Nazis, often for thirty-six hours on end under deadly fire from Russian troops, outside Leningrad. He was later imprisoned in a gruesome underground cell at Kaunas (Kovno), from the effects of which experience he still suffers in a sanitorium in France.

THE second piece of evidence was contained in a letter written by Antonin Daniel to S. E. Mann of the British Ministry of Information, who before the war was lecturer in English at the Masaryk University in Brno and knew this Gypsy student well. In Czechoslovakia, in pre-war days, there was at Oslavany a flourishing colony of some one hundred and fifty Gypsy men, women, and children who contentedly followed their own trades and had made themselves acceptable to the country folk in that district by their skill as basket-makers, their exceptional knowledge of horses, and above all by the magic of their music. After the war Mr. Daniel wrote to Mr. Mann: "The whole Oslavany colony was taken a few years ago by the Nazis to Oswiecim, where they were done to death. There were only five survivors, among them myself, my sister, and my mother."

THE Belgian review *Message* of November 13, 1942 reported a crime in Serbia more horrible than any in the three centuries of anti-Gypsy legislation: "One of the most recent crimes of the Germans seems to us to surpass by far all others, because in addition to the suffering it gave rise to, it destroyed gentleness and beauty: all the Gypsies of Serbia have been massacred! . . . These merchants of poetry, prognostications, lies, and songs were hunted down on the roads over which they fled, mounted on their galloping scarecrows of horses, their rolling caravans full of cries, color, and mystery."

At that date it was impossible to get any confirmation of this tale of terror, but since

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then the following authentic evidence has been collected by the Gypsy Lore Society (of England) from eyewitnesses, Gypsies and others, who had survived these holocausts. From Sarajevo Professor Rade Uhlik, whose carefully corroborated evidence is indisputable, writes:

"Before the war no Gypsy settlements had ever been more prosperous and self-supporting: today they are utterly derelict, and the Gypsy survivors have fled to Northeast Bosnia. . . . In so-called 'Independent' Croatia some twenty-eight thousand Gypsies were mercilessly butchered, and this computation, if not strictly reliable, is certainly underestimated. For the few children of fortune who did manage to escape from the hell of concentration camps and crematoria relate with horror that it was among a hundred thousand or so candidates for death that they witnessed the most awful and heart-rending scenes, when these barbarians tore Gypsy children from their mothers and fathers and hurled them into the crematory ovens. . . . The whole of Gypsydom in Croatia between the rivers Sava and Drava have been exterminated. They were massacred chiefly as 'Non-Aryans'—what a terribly ironic fate for the oldest Indo-Aryan race in existence!—being so designated on racial-political grounds, but also because they professed the Greek Orthodox faith. . . . I have to report with deep distress that their splendid, unique dialect of Romani has now become extinct. Only a few adult men, who at the outbreak of hostilities happened to be in prison, have survived the wholesale massacre. And since this remnant (perhaps one per cent of the whole number of Gypsies), having become nervous wrecks, are also useless from the biological point of view, owing to the total extermination of the women and children, there can be no Gypsy posterity for them—or for the world."

M. Frédéric Max, of the French Embassy, early in 1946 sent us a first-hand account of the treatment of Gypsies in Nazi concentration camps. Though himself never at Auschwitz "where thousands of Gypsies were interned and where whole tribes were sent to the gas chamber," he received faithful reports from a convoy of surviving Gypsies who came to Buchenwald in May 1944, which reports he confirmed by information from non-Gypsies, chiefly Jews, who had the rare good luck to return from that camp of death.

At Buchenwald the Gypsies from Germany, Bohemia, and Poland, he says, were lodged together in a block of "Blacks," so called because the inmates of this part of the camp were branded on the chest with a black triangle, to distinguish them as "asocials" from political prisoners, German law-breakers, and religious adversaries, who bore respectively a red, green, or violet stigma.

At Birkenau camp, the antechamber to Auschwitz itself, the Gypsies from Slovakia and the South of Poland were subjected to unspeakable tortures before being consigned to the gas chambers. "Many Gypsy women were selected for the 'experimental pavilion,' where German doctors experimented with artificial impregnation followed by abortion." In January 1945, before the approach of the Russian Army, the Auschwitz camp was evacuated, and the prisoners were driven westward by long forced marches without food, so that many of them died of cold and hunger or exhaustion or were suffocated in the barns into which they were crowded at night. Others were beaten to death by the SS or murdered in the forests by the Volkssturm. Very few survived.

In Dr. Bendell's evidence, given in the Belsen trial at Luneberg (as reported in the London *Daily Telegraph* of October 2, 1945), the information supplied by M. Max is confirmed by the statement that "of 11,000 Gypsies in a special camp at Auschwitz all were killed except 1,500 selected for working parties," i.e. slave labor. But no further corroboration of this coldblooded mass murder is needed beyond the callous sworn testimony of the Nazi commandant of Auschwitz himself, Rudolf Franz Ferdinand Hoess, as published by William S. Shirer in *End of a Berlin Diary*.

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THROUGHOUT the war young Gypsies who regained their freedom, together with hundreds of others who had never come under the Nazi heel, devoted their liberty to helping the Maquis and other resistance groups in their fight against Hitler, and more than one escaped prisoner-of-war has had reason to thank his Gypsy hosts who passed him from camp to camp till a neutral country was reached. No wonder that a young Gypsy writer recently suggested that "the United Nations institute an enquiry into the source of those monstrous Nazi orders to exterminate our race . . . so that the Gypsy martyrs at Auschwitz be avenged, like those of France or Poland, not by the fury of barbarism but by the hand of Justice."

It would be proper, also, for the nations to see that the Gypsy survivors who may find a refuge among them are treated with decency and respect, and allowed to lead their own lives in their own way, unharassed by the authorities. Since peace came to the world, many hidebound government officials seem to regard the Gypsies as an "anachronism." There are protection societies for wild birds, wild flowers, and other rarities—but there is no protection, even in America, for wild Gypsies.

"Where we Gypsy survivors desire," declared Matéo Maximoff, a talented Romani author now with his people in Montreuil-sous-Bois, in France, "is complete liberty—that is the right to travel freely in the pursuit of our various trades, which would mean that facilities to cross frontiers should be extended to all Gypsies. . . . Just as no one could prevent the flower from budding or the bird from making his nest in the spring, so no one should stop the Gypsy from wandering over the face of the globe. For our race is a part of nature. We bring joy and gaiety to the villages through which we pass, because wherever we go we carry with us that element of mystery that intrigues the whole world."

History has proved again and again that the well-meaning but misguided attempts of philanthropists and missionaries to cure the Gypsies of their nomadism will never succeed. Though they may settle down contentedly in their winter quarters and send their children to school regularly during six months of the year, as soon as spring returns "wanderlust" will attack them and the urge to take to the road prove irresistible. If Gypsies are allowed to fashion their own fate and are freed from public interference, they will find their own way of fitting into the modern world and contributing their own unique value to their fellow-men.

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ON THE MARGIN IN FRANCE

Life in a World of Uneasy Moneys

MILTON KLONSKY

YOU don't have to be a millionaire to appreciate our own well-bred, balanced, clean-cut American dollar that, out of its heart of gold, endows and supports the world. What a credit to us all! Respected everywhere, it wears the same democratic green for all denominations, and, no matter how hard it works, always looks neat and crisp, ready for another round. On the other hand, take those practically-good-for-nothing, undependable, zoot-cut foreign type (there are so many of them), dressed up loudly in four numbers and four colors, they puff and plume themselves even more the higher up they go, but, after a month of making the rounds, they're already worn and faded and fall apart in your hands. Who knows from what seamy pocket of society they come? Any American tourist in, say, France can tell you what a deprivation it is to exchange hard American cash for such confetti; especially, as is often the case, when the transaction is made on the black market in some dark alley or bistro where his money is furtively counted out and wrapped by one of the hundreds of street-Arabs who live on the margin.

Gavroches, "street-Arabs," the French call them. And they are, literally, street-Arabs, most of them as shabby and suspicious looking as an old franc note. Of the more than one hundred and twenty thousand Arabs concentrated in Paris alone, and with new swarms crossing each year—comparable in scope to the Puerto Rican influx in New York—these black-money changers are the most fortunate remnant. For one thing, financial conditions since the war have been overripe; and for another, they all have had at least some training in their profession by the time they arrive, having already exchanged the solid misery of North Africa for the inflated promises of Europe. The green tourist can run into them almost anywhere; but their best-known and most familiar hangout is at the Place de l'Opéra, near the offices of the American Express Company, and there you can see them clustered around corner lampposts in groups of two and three, almost like American high-school boys on the make, tense and hawk-eyed, but with the same air of grim nonchalance. Not even the fear of the Paris *flics* can keep them off the corner. Occasionally, of course, the police in their wagons come sheering down the street like a wild pitch, whoever gets hit is replaced, that's that, and they're all back again the next day. For the law is regarded by these *gavroches* not as a moral but as a natural force, like droughts and khamsins in North Africa.

Now, although the Arab money changers on the street are the most numerous in Paris, they are really only the small-fry of the racket, dealing in petty sums for a very meager profit. Their true ancestors are not Fugger and Rothschild, but those shifty-eyed characters who used to sell postcards to American tourists before the war. Most of them have no working capital of their own, and merely search out the clients for bigger shots, who give them five francs on every dollar. These, in turn, pass on their accumulated dollars to still bigger shots, and so on and on, in an ever descending ladder disap-

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FROM France, MILTON KLONSKY sends a personal report on the eccentricities of international finance—untouched, at the time, by the most recent devaluation—as it involves the lives of various people in that country. Mr. Klonsky was born in Brooklyn in 1921. He has contributed several articles to COMMENTARY; the most recent was "Greenwich Village: Rise and Fall," in November 1948.

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pearing into those dimly lit regions where finance and politics are merged. Without some direct connection to the Bourse, where the value of the dollar vis-à-vis the franc shifts from hour to hour, it would be too risky for anyone to speculate on his own. The memory of those who tried and failed is always fresh. But between the few powerful financiers on the Bourse who set the rate of exchange, and the hundreds of *gavroches* working the streets, clip-artists merely, there is also a middle group of money changers with branch relations from top to bottom, and these, for the most part, are Jews. With the exception of the Arabs, the Jewish money changers are the best-known and the most available in Paris.

THE mortification such a spectacle must cause to American Jews coming to Paris can be appreciated—but only proportionately—by "refined" Jews living in New York who are confronted every day by rabbis with long beards and yamelkas on their heads walking down Fifth Avenue, garment workers talking Yiddish on the subway, etc. What apologies to be made to themselves, what shame and fear of being identified with them! And, underneath, comes the old wail of David: "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon (or something like that), lest the *goyim* rejoice." A disgrace to the family! But who really cares? Certainly not these money changers, the flotsam of Europe's DP camps, who no longer have any stake in the good or evil opinion of the Gentile. As for the people of Paris, they care even less, having seen enough in recent years not to be shocked by this; and, besides, the good old-fashioned image of the Jew as usurer, the one that served their fathers and their fathers' fathers so well, is much more comfortable to live with than the nightmare image of the Nazis. There is a compound irony to all this, an historical-metaphysical joke. For it was in the role of stateless money jobbers that the Jews made their earliest entrance into the European economy, and now, with the money systems of Europe having relapsed into a Merovingian chaos, they find themselves playing the same old roles again just before the curtain falls.

The Arab money changers, however, don't get the joke at all. Where their spheres cross in the day-by-day working of the exchange, their rivalry is venomous, overcast always by the memory of the war in Palestine. To patronize one side, is to have to endure the bile and back-bite of the other. Of course, wealthy American tourists—the B.O.F.'s, Boeufs, Oeufs et Fromage, as they are called here—can easily remain neutral in this petty war. For even if they have no direct connection to the Bourse, all the better hotels in Paris provide a black market service. Consequently, the bulk of clients who patronize either the Jews or the Arabs are drawn from: (1) Americans with jobs in Paris that pay off in dollars, (2) frugal tourists, (3) GIs studying or not studying at the Sorbonne, and (4) those cadres of artists, writers, and fellow-travelers of Bohemia who have begun to reassemble on the Left Bank.

Every day the official and the unofficial (or black market) rates of exchange are published in the morning papers side by side with the New York, London, and Paris stock quotations; so that, unfortunately, the distinctions between the operations of high finance and the deals of the money market are somehow blurred, as though both were the same kind of capitalist sport. When to sell and when to hold on until the rate goes higher, the week's standings and prospects for the future, these are among the most lively topics of conversation among Americans in Paris.

The rate printed in the papers, however, is never the one paid out in the market—only a direct Bourse connection can get that—and one usually gets ten to twenty points lower, depending on the agent and the amount to be cashed. And traveler's checks are always worth ten or fifteen points less than cash. As a rule, the brokers in the Quartier Juif can offer a better rate than the Arabs; but the Arabs, working on a smaller margin, try to make up for this by their persistence and their aggressive business tactics. The differ-

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ence between the two is somewhat like the corner shoeshine stand in the States compared to the kids hawking up and down the streets. At the beginning of each week the rate usually goes down, because of the Sunday holiday on the Bourse, and it rises towards the end; and also, the issuing of GI student allotments at the end of the month, turned into traveler's checks and cashed on the black market, may cause a slight fall in the exchange rate. To understand these rhythms helps a great deal. But the really large trends and shifts in the value of the dollar are among those imponderables that no one can safely predict.

Of course the activity on the black market is very well known—any *flic* on the corner can quote the daily rate—and yet it seems inconceivable that a government so much in need of dollars for its foreign exchange would tolerate this situation. By conservative estimate, at least one-third of the tourist income was being sluiced off by the black market. One explanation, based on the myth of French parsimony, claims that the black market provides a living for hundreds of Jews and Arabs who might otherwise become wards of the state; and another, less generous, sees the whole affair as an elaborate bonus or simple come-on for tourists, since the legal rate is set so low. Though both theories contradict one another, the problem persists. The few half-hearted attempts by the police to mop up the black market only serve to spread the mess further into the corners of Paris. And, while the French do require that all foreign currency and traveler's checks be cashed at a legal office and declared on the passport, what can the tourist do when a teller at the bank itself slyly offers him a black market rate, or forgets to enter the transaction? I have heard of tourists being approached in the elevator of one of the largest banks in Paris; on top of the Eiffel Tower; in the metro; by concierges, and bell-hops in hotels; by waiters; by little old ladies in black; but mainly, of course, by the Arab and Jewish professionals in their respective haunts. Moreover, Americans who arrive for only a short stay find that the black market offers them a taste of the *real* life of Paris, something more like it, and not just another tourist trap. It doesn't take long before even the most righteous are tempted, bite, and fall.

PERHAPS my own experience can serve as an example. When I first came to Paris last winter the black market rate was then at its peak—about 550 francs to the dollar compared to the official rate of 320—largely as a result of the government's devaluation of the franc. This rise brought with it a kind of acquisitive gambling fever which infected the American section of Paris on both the Left and Right banks. One of the leading newspapers had just published a series of articles showing how an American could support himself on no money at all by adroitly playing the market. The Communist party, knowing a good thing when it saw one, had covered the walls and billboards with huge posters—the number 550 printed in bright red—attributing this situation to Wall Street and the Marshall Plan. There were half a dozen Arabs competing with one another on every street, and any one of them could spot an American at a glance.

Alors, it did not take long before one of these *gavroches* saw me coming and asked me, in perfect English, not to be a sucker. That was the first time; but from then on, I moved from one to another, exchanging my dollars and my Chesterfields for their francs and acrid *Gauloises.* There was Haj, a *louche-* and dangerous-looking fellow who never smiled, but would press my thigh every once in a while for reassurance; "Joe," from Tunis, who was in awe of everything American and drank Coca-Cola; Mouley, the oldest in the group, who kept talking about his wife's *koush-koush,* a dish with rice; and many others.

As you get to know these Arab money changers better, and their quills lie down, they will do extraordinary things for you merely out of friendship. For instance, they have a trick of folding one-thousand franc notes in half to make them look like two; and, unless you watch them every minute,

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they can walk off with your money without troubling to change it. To treat you as one of their kind (and they "con" one another as a matter of course), is a sign of their esteem. Had they suspected that I was a Jew, however, our relations would have been more formal and perhaps more honest. But, as one of them once told me, "You can always tell a Jew by his arms—they hang down to his knees"; and I had no desire to prove my authenticity.

In time our relations became so friendly that I found I could trust none of them any longer. Therefore, when an American I knew offered to take me to the Quartier Juif to meet his money changer, and, incidentally, get some real chopped liver, lox, and even blintzes, I was glad to come along.

THE old Jewish quarter of Paris (or what remains of it) is located off one of the most fashionable shopping streets on the Right Bank, the Rue de Rivoli, but at the far side where it suddenly turns cut-rate into a *tohu-bohu* of pushcarts and cheap variety stores, the way Fifth Avenue in New York runs down into 14th Street. On the sidewalk pitchmen sell fountain pens, rosaries, potato peelers, static removers; singing beggars pass up and down sometimes with monkeys and parrots; red-hot crêpes suzettes frying in real kirsch are vended from open stalls like American frankfurters and orangeade. Through this carnival-like section it was a slow push of four or five blocks before reaching the Rue Vieille du Temple that leads directly into the Jewish quarters. Compared to the hubbub of life a short distance away, this street had a bare and almost somber quality.

We crossed over into a café that seemed from the outside like any other in Paris; but then, as though ten years or three thousand miles of ocean had been crossed out, we heard the almost forgotten tones of Yiddish coming from tables all around us. This was surely the place. On the counter were trays full of the good food that has done so much to keep the Jewish people together throughout the Diaspora. I sat down and ordered the wafers and the wine, while my friend went to fetch his money changer.

In a short time he was back accompanied by Mr. B., a man with curly gray hair who could speak no English and little French, Yiddish alone with a true Litvak accent. Mr. B. was impatient and irritable, as though he had held the winning hand in a game of pinochle when he was called away. Before he said Hello he said How Much. Now, before going inside, my friend had coached me to change only a small sum, as the market was very low that week and was expected to rise. When I took out a five-dollar bill with a self-deprecating, apologetic air, Mr. B. leaned over an inch away: "Don't wait another day, change all you have." But my friend winked as though this were his usual line. "Personally I should worry," he said, "but take my advice like a brother." Still, I held my ground, and the exchange he offered immediately after was high, only ten points less than the rate in the papers. We parted on these good terms and he shrugged off to his card game.

The next week, just as Mr. B. had said it would, the black market fell again, finishing on the lowest level since the inflation began. From a high of 550 a couple of months ago, the dollar was now worth only about 470 francs. And while the newspapers were beginning to carry rumors of an imminent collapse on Wall Street and mass unemployment in the United States, French recovery, on the other hand, was growing more manifest every day. White bread, pastry, and jam had come back in the shop windows; butter, cheese, milk, and gasoline might soon be available to Frenchmen as well as to tourists. With the help of credits granted by the Marshall Plan and the elimination of German competition, the French economy was producing more goods than it had in 1928, and was even approaching the peak of its greatest years before the First World War. It seemed as though the black market would soon be eaten by the revived cock of France.

Despite all this evidence, however, there were few Americans in Paris who believed

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the slump in the dollar could go much further, and they were willing to support this hunch with the most agate-angled political and financial reasons. In the cafés off St. Germain des Prés, and in those off the Champs Elysées, the important talk of war and art and sex was mixed up with chatter about the price of gold ingots and sovereigns, the international rate in Tangiers, etc. Some ingenious schemes, worthy of the Big Time, were devised to get ahead of the money market. For example, it was a common practice at that time for a set of American residents to pool their money, appoint one of themselves as agent, and send him by third-class to Switzerland (a trip of about thirteen hours one way), there to buy Swiss francs officially, which could then be changed for French francs at a very profitable rate. And then there was the traffic in gas coupons, even more involved than the Swiss franc business. First, one had to have a certificate attesting the ownership or rental of a car, properly notarized and stamped with passport number, date of arrival in France, etc., which could be made out by the Frenchman to whom the gas coupons would be sold; then this certificate, American passport, and the *carte grise*, or license of the aforementioned car, were presented at the bureau, which also required thirty dollars to be cashed at the legal rate; and finally, after an interminable waiting and stamping and declaring, the coupons would be issued and sold. About nine thousand francs could be made on two hundred liters of gas, and the process repeated every month. But most Americans who changed money on the street or in the quarter without qualms drew back at such devious chicanery. As the dollar kept falling, they preferred to wait and see.

THOUGH I waited with them until my francs were almost gone, there was still no lift in the market for the next week and and the week after that. It was time to see Mr. B. again, before the rate fell much lower. I found him in the back of the same café on the Rue Vieille du Temple still sitting with his cronies and playing pinochle over a glass of tea. This time, however, he threw down his cards as soon as he saw me, took me aside with a confidential arm and said no; even for me, he couldn't change any more money; he was finished in the business. Such a pitch, if it was one, was unheard-of among the money changers in Paris. But Mr. B. kept smiling and shaking his head. It made no difference when I told him that, this time, I wanted to change a much larger sum; that, next time, I wanted him to meet some friends of mine just arrived from the States; that it would be the last time. For, with the money he had made in the lush days, Mr. B. was about to go to Palestine—in five or six months; and for the present, he told me with a certain pride, he was no longer dealing with clients directly but through his agents. In the primitive economic warfare on the black market, Mr. B. had earned his commission on the field and I congratulated him. Finally, as I was about to leave, he agreed to change my money but at a very low rate, about twenty-five points below the figure in the papers. Yet, after all this, how could I refuse?

Meanwhile, the fall in the market was working real hardship among the Arab money changers, whose volume of business and margin of profit had been cut in half. They were now operating so close to the American Express Company on the Place de l'Opéra that only the fear of the police could have kept them from opening a rival stand inside, right next to the teller's window. The posters against the Marshall Plan set up by the Communists, with the magic number 550 printed in red, were now faded on all the billboards or covered up with new appeals. As for the Americans—especially the GI students at the Sorbonne—they too were taking it hard. Restaurant and hotel prices were still high and going higher. Beer was being ordered at the bars, rather than Pernod or cognac, and tips for waiters were now carefully counted out to fifteen per cent of the bill. Of course, everyone was cashing money on the black market as before, still hoping for a rise, but harking back nostalgically to the days when the rate was 470, or

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450, or 420. . . . And there were always new arrivals just off the boat to whom a rate of 400 seemed like a lot of francs for the dollar.

A friend of mine from New York having just come in from one of these boats, I found myself, with only three months seniority, appointed as a guide or middleman, so to speak, between the ins-and-outs of Paris. But times had changed—it wasn't the Bal Tabourin or the Louvre or the Jardin des Plantes that he wanted to see, but the money changers in the Jewish quarter. Their fame had already crossed the Atlantic. With Mr. B. out of business, however, there was nothing for us to do but wander about the streets of the quarter, looking as American as possible, in the hope that someone might pick us up.

A block past Mr. B.'s favorite hangout, where the Rue Vieille du Temple turns and twists itself into a medieval by-way too narrow for modern traffic, and where even the buildings seem to be squeezed taller, we ran into a man who took one look at us. "Hallo American!" he yelled, almost as a command. This was Pepisse (as we learned later), a Jewish refugee from Algiers, about twenty or forty years old, who had come to Paris to make some money before settling down in Palestine. He marched us as though we were his prisoners of war further down the street and into a dingy little café.

HERE were no counters loaded with hot and cold delicacies, or marble-topped tables each with its seltzer bottle, no, only a large horseshoe shaped bar behind which a man was slowly wiping and wiping one spot while watching us come in. In the back, however, behind a screen of tobacco smoke, there was the usual set of customers playing cards and drinking glasses of tea. One of these, smiling carefully, rose to meet us when he saw Pepisse, but no one else looked up from his hand. He introduced himself as Albert, Pepisse's partner, and was formal even to the point of shaking hands in the French manner. Alone, neither Pepisse nor Albert would have appeared out of the ordinary; but together they contrasted like a vaudeville team. Albert was pale and clerkish-looking, wore glasses, and seemed to have spent all his life enclosed in large cities or concentration camps; while Pepisse, with his large eyes set into a soft Arab-dark face, looked like a tropical fruit that had been allowed to ripen too long in the sun. I heard Albert ask Pepisse, in Yiddish, if he thought I was a Jew; and, from the way he said it, I knew I was in. To be an American *and* a Jew was to be twice-blessed in the quarter. Albert offered me a "High-Life" cigarette (he pronounced it "hig-leaf"), the closest to an American brand in France, but I gave him one of my last Chesterfields instead.

While waiting for the coffee we ordered to drip through the filter, we discussed the fall in the market—they were still optimistic—and various ways of making a living—mainly corrupt—gradually leading around to our business. Albert wanted us to get gas coupons with our tourist visas, and even offered to forge a certificate signifying ownership of a car. And Pepisse, as though to top this, told of an ingenious way to get a car for nothing, which, as I recall vaguely, involved finding a Swede who would buy a French Simca abroad with kroners, selling it in France for double the price in francs, and so on, ending with enough profit to buy another Simca. We listened to all this bland *escroquerie* with wonder. But what was there to say? You had the sense that they were still living in the shadow of some nightmare world from which Europe had just awakened, where all the daylight rules of morality were suspended. And where Tartuffe had no place.

Anyhow, when my friend took out of his wallet, not dollars, as they had expected, but traveler's checks, Pepisse made a sound through his lips like air going out of a balloon. It lasted long enough for one of the tables of pinochle players to turn to see what was happening. A little sadly, Albert explained that "they"—his connections on the Bourse—did not like traveler's checks, as they were hard to negotiate and dangerous to carry; but, if "they" did accept them, the two signatures on the top and bottom of

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each check had to match exactly. It was obvious, however, that my friend had signed his checks in contrasting moods. Albert examined them, and shook his head; and Pepisse did likewise; when, at that moment, a man with a tightly curled black beard and a face out of an ancient Assyrian bas-relief detached himself from the smoke in the back and came into the round. He took the checks from Pepisse and studied them as though they were Scripture. "This is you?" he asked my friend. Then, to Pepisse: *"Nu,* give him the money," and there was nothing more to be said.

DURING the following weeks, I came back regularly to the café, watching the card players with Pepisse and Albert. But I never saw either of them take up a hand, for those were very hard times. The dollar had fallen so low, a mere twenty points above the legal rate, that even Americans who had no moral objections to the black market were changing their money more conveniently at the banks. Pepisse, especially, was worried. He had heard rumors that North African Jews-without-money were given only the bottom jobs in Israel; and besides he wanted to get married before he left. While Albert, who had been at various times an upholsterer, a maker of ladies' handbags, and a furrier before the war, had planned on opening a store of his own in Tel Aviv. Day after day they sat waiting for clients who never showed up. This was also the time when first milk, then butter, then cheese came back on free sale, thereby enabling the French bourgeoisie to recapture the old illusion of progress, forgotten during two decades of depression and war. But for Pepisse and Albert, when the free economy of France went up, the side they were sitting on would surely go down.

Sitting with them on a dull afternoon, I asked about the Temple. "The Temple?" Pepisse repeated after me. I watched him rummage through his mind with the same rapt, absent look of a small boy picking his nose. "Isn't this the Rue Vieille du Temple?" I said. The image I had in mind was of a building very old and venerable, not quite as grand as Notre Dame perhaps, but worthy of having a street named after it. "Ah, he means the *shul,"* said Albert; though he, personally, couldn't understand why I wanted to see it. Albert, who prided himself on being very American, never went to the synagogue himself except on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Nevertheless, since business was slow and as a favor to me, they would be glad to take me there.

As it turned out, the Temple was not located on the Rue Vieille du Temple after all, but on the far side of the Jewish quarter. To get there we had to walk down a long street called the Rue des Rosiers, and here, for the first time, I could hear and see and smell the old ghetto life of Paris. We passed a fish store improvised out of a hallway where the fish were kept alive in barrels and buckets of green water; old women carrying huge baskets of pretzels on their hips; a fly-blown butcher shop where salamis and specials and the entrails of cattle hung side by side from nails hammered into the wall. A Polish Talmud student passed by in midnight gabardine, high-heeled boots, and a wide-brimmed black hat, his sideburns licked into curls on his cheeks, who looked as though he might have flown out of a painting of Chagall. Everyone in the quarter seemed to be outside, either darting about in a great hurry, or standing and talking in volatile little groups whose original members and subjects of conversation had long since been superceded. The bustle of this life resembled that of a permanent community; and yet, as I was told, most of these people had come only a year ago or less and were on their way to Palestine.

It was a slow walk, for Albert and Pepisse kept running into friends to whom they would introduce me, proudly, as an American. And whenever we passed a café, one of them would run inside while we waited, listen to the conversation, and then rush out again. I asked Pepisse what they were talking about. *"Lukshen* and *kreplach,"* he answered, by which he meant dollars and traveler's checks, slang derived from the

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heroic days of the black market when such irreverence was still possible.

Finally, at the bottom of the Rue des Rosiers, we arrived at the *shul,* as Albert rightly called it, a plain stone anonymous-looking structure that would not have been out of place in the Bronx or Brooklyn. It took only a nod at me and the password "American!" to the sexton to get him to open the door. Without a hat or a scarf, however, I had to tie up the four corners of an old handkerchief to cover my head—the same sort of yamelka I had often worn long ago as a boy in New York.

Inside, the weak afternoon light made everything seem drab and second-hand rather than antique. There were stands for the rabbi and the cantor and rows of heavy oak benches for the congregation; but, on either side of the hall, were two large silver candelabra, and in the center was a great Lion of Judah embroidered in gold on the red velvet curtain over the Torah. Standing there as solemn as a bridegroom between the two money changers, with one hand on my head to keep the handkerchief from falling off, I felt alien and ridiculous. What had I come for? I told myself the dull fact of its existence was enough to make it holy—as Jews even in the days of Moses have congratulated themselves on their own survival. It seemed to me then that the great French concept of universal man was confuted here, in the middle of Paris, by this survival; for although the concept and the substance of man himself could be changed or obliterated by history, the Jewish attribute seemed to be something deeper after all. Ah well, these were only the compensations of rhetoric, not worth much more than the stained glass and flying buttresses of Notre Dame. *"Nu?"* said Pepisse. The sexton was rattling his keys.

THE next visit I made to the Jewish quarter was more than a month later, as, in the meantime, I had to leave for Nice in Southern France. During that month, the month of Easter, the black market almost rose again. It went up miraculously 10 points, 15, 20, 25 . . . and then, just as everyone thought it would keep going, back down it went and stayed there. But the legal exchange, which had remained fixed at 320 francs to the dollar for months, now climbed to 330; so that the margin of difference between the black market rate and the bank's was even narrower. Only the most frugal American tourist, a provincial *grippe sou,* would care to change his money illegally in order to make five or ten more francs per dollar. To cap all this, the government now required Americans who wanted their monthly tourist's ration of gas to change one hundred dollars instead of thirty at the legal rate. And not long after, gasoline went back on free sale even for Frenchmen, thereby finishing the racket most closely allied to the black market.

When I arrived in Nice, however, I found the market much different but in a healthier state than the one in Paris. It had its own breed of money changers and a distinctive clientele, as suited the largest and once the most fashionable resort on the Riviera. There was no Jewish quarter here, certainly; and though there were many Arabs, these were of the mild and picturesque types shown in the travel posters—not a *gavroche* among them—who made their livings peddling rugs, leather goods, talismans, and bracelets under the palm trees of the Promenade des Anglais. The exchange itself was conducted in a discreet manner by the British and American residents of long standing—and mainly in pounds, rather than dollars, for English money was still the main tourist support of Nice. But it wasn't like the old days. In the low condition of the pound was reflected, as by a social mirror, the decayed and dowdy elegance of Nice, its old mansions broken up into *pensions,* its cut-rate restaurants, its cheap chrome and neon bars. The swank and style of the international *haut monde* had passed to the upstart city of Cannes, less than twenty miles away, where the American dollar had its seat.

Even when the black market was high, the British had been compelled to squeeze as many francs as possible out of each pound

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in order to remain in France. The Labor government allowed only fifty pounds a year for each traveler; and, when that was gone, it meant goodbye to the soft life of Nice, meat and butter and pastry, and back to the austerity of England. But now, with the black market value of the dollar itself almost on a par with the legal exchange, the much weaker pound fell far below its official rate. Barclay's Bank in Nice offered 1075 francs for the pound, while the black market-price was only 975! The Continental spivs who ran the market in Nice drew their clients from tourists who had already exhausted their fifty pounds. And for those who could not get extra pounds over the border or through the mails, the newspapers in Nice were full of ads offering to buy jewels, rings, gold coins, etc. To such a pathetic state had the old Imperial vacation declined.

On my last day in Nice, however, I was stopped short by a restaurant on a side street with a sign in French marked: KOCHER. A middle-aged man sitting inside by himself yelled "Sholem Aleichem!" and beckoned me to join him.

This was Mr. G., once a lawyer from Vienna, who had come to Nice from a DP camp a year ago. And over a glass of Perrier water, he began to relate the usual tale of torture, kidnaping, murder, and mutilation which has become by now as impersonal and tedious as someone else's hypochondria. From that, without any transition at all, he offered to change my money. We reached an agreement.

But before we were able to complete the transaction, a French butcher from across the street came into the restaurant to see the proprietor, and sat down at the next table. Mr. G. showed me the palms of his hands. It seemed that this butcher supplied the restaurant with kosher meat delivered from a slaughter house in Switzerland, for there was none in the whole South of France. For a half hour he sat there in his bloody apron breathing all the air in the room, until, at last, we had to complete our business in the WC in the rear. Mr. G., counting out the money with his eyes downcast, was so nervous that he shook and twice he dropped the bills on the wet floor. And as I turned to leave, he was holding such a mess of francs and dollars crumpled in his fist that he couldn't open them, even for a moment, to shake hands.

BACK in Paris, the warm weather had come at last. It seemed as though this new post-postwar not quite pre-war spring and the winter that had just passed were as far apart as the two seasons of the moon. All the hotels were full of free-spending American tourists. The crush on the corner of St. Germain des Prés at night, where the Café Flore and the Deux Magots are situated, was like 8th Street in Greenwich Village on a Saturday night. There were still a few *gavroches* around the American Express, but the best rate they offered was even less than the bank's. For the French franc was now the strongest currency on the continent, with the exception of the Swiss franc.

I went up to the Jewish quarter, and here again the spring had changed everything. The restaurant on the Rue Vieille du Temple where I had first met Mr. B. was now crowded with tourists come for a home-cooked meal. Where was Albert? Where was Pepisse? Up the street, the little horseshoe bar was almost empty, and the pinochle players were gone.

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FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

THE KANLIPER B.&S.B.S. OF N.Y.

Social Security Through the "Landsmanshaften"

HARRY GERSH

MY GRANDFATHER Berl, *olav hasholem,* worried a lot about the younger generation. He worried about their losing their religion, about their forgetting their Jewishness (which has nothing to do with religion), and about their losing their *geshmak* in living. And I found out that Grandpa had reason to be worried when I recently overheard some Jewish businessmen discussing Jewish societies. It was apparent that they were confusing family circles with *landsmanshaften.* They wouldn't confuse the Dodgers and the Centerville Cubs. Grandpa was right. What Jew, living a Jewish life, could make such a mistake?

What is the difference between a *landsman* "verein" (society) and a family circle? We had a family circle once. Once each year we met in a Rumanian restaurant off Second Avenue. (The restaurateur guaranteed a *haimish* cook who knew what to do with eggplant and green peppers.) At the meeting all the new sons- and daughters-in-law were introduced and the new grandchildren were displayed and lied about. We overate, had a wonderful time, and faithfully promised to see each other more often. After all, we were of the same blood, the same people.

The family circle was an attempt to conquer time and distance. Its sole bond was sentiment—sentiment trying to overcome the natural growing apart of people developing new interests and friends. It is some kind of crime among all peoples not to love your relatives. Among Jews it is a capital crime.

A *landsmanshaft* is different. Sentiment is there, but the major motivations are religious, economic, social, and psychological. Are there stronger motivations? The society insures its members against all catastrophes that occur to man—sickness, accidents, death, economic disaster. The religious side isn't as important as it was when the verein supplied *shuls,* but it's there. As for the social, now that the parvenus have gone through bridge and gin to that new Argentine game, where can a man find a decent pinochle game except at the verein? As for a quiet home life—this is psychology—watch the tensions building up in the man next door as the monthly meeting of his society comes closer. Then see him come home at peace with the world. He has settled the affairs of the world, with special reference to the Jews, purged himself of all his bitterness, aggressiveness, argumentativeness, all in one evening.

There are about two thousand *landsmanshaften* in the United States. It took the WPA Jewish Writers Project a long time to dig them out and they didn't exhaust the supply. Name a town between the Oder and the Urals, inside the old Russian Pale,

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HARRY GERSH's previous informal sociological explorations in COMMENTARY have addressed themselves to such various aspects of American Jewish culture as home cooking, *kochaleins,* and "paintners." He turns here to another of the basic institutions of Jewish life—the *landsmanshaften,* those characteristic Jewish immigrant societies. Mr. Gersh is in the educational department of the Textile Workers Union of America. He studied at the Drexel Institute of Technology, Brookwood College, New York University, and the University of Paris. He was born in New York in 1912.

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and you'll find its transplanted Jews holding monthly meetings somewhere south of Central Park.

WHEN the immigrants of 1880-1910 landed in America they looked first for a place to sleep. If a *landsman* didn't meet them at the dock they had an address to go to, a *landsman's* address. And if there were five recent arrivals bedded down in the big room, still they made a place for the newcomer. A pallet of some kind could be borrowed. And if the last arrival hadn't brought his own *perineh,* his featherbed, from home, he shared the *landsman's,* sleeping alongside.

The second and third necessities were a place to work and a place to pray. The priority depended on the age and background of the individual immigrant. But most newcomers needed both. Work was a matter of *landsman* connections. And prayer with *landsmenner* was more satisfying.

The need to pray, and the desire to pray among known faces and names, led to the creation of hometown congregations. Many verein started as, or in, shuls. Today few societies are linked to places of worship, now that the old neighborhoods are gone. But when the Litvaks lived back of Cherry Street, and the Galitzianer were east of Avenue A, and Rivington Street was little Rumania, each *gubernia* and each *shtetel* had its own synagogue. Of course, the Lodzer shul and the Kishinever shul were not the same as the shul in Lodz and the shul in Kishinev. After all, this was America.

In the old country there had been three castes of shul members. You knew to which group a man belonged by where he sat in shul, by when he came to services, and by what *Aliyah* he was given. (An *Aliyah* is the portion of the day's chapters from the Torah read by members of the congregation called to the *bimah* for the reading.) The *Mizrach* (east, therefore holy) *Yiden* were the very learned, and, of course, the rich. The *Marev Yiden* were the shopkeepers, the middle class. Then there were the *Erev Rav,* the plain people.

In the new shuls on the East Side every *landsman* faced the East. When everyone worked in a shop or at a pushcart, economic caste lines were wiped out. With little time for study, learning too was equalized.

Golden land or no golden land, almost at once the *landsmenner* started to have their troubles. Some got sick and needed help. Some old folks died and needed burial. Some lost their jobs or went on strike or went bankrupt and needed money. In each case, they, or their relatives, went to the shul to tell the sad story and to take counsel with the *landsmenner.* A few days or weeks later (with the Litvaks it might take months) the Chevra Anshei Shem of Old Constantin or the United Lutzker Young Men's and Ladies' Association or the Independent Prushnitzer K. U. Verein or the Samachwalowitzer Progressive Benevolent Association was born.

FIRST order of business for the new verein was the buying of a cemetery or a large plot in an existing burial ground. This came first because death gives little advance notice and you can't hold off death by passing around the hat in shul. A place to rest among friendly names was a necessity, and an attraction for new members besides. Next the society attacked the problem of sickness. They set up a fund to pay weekly cash benefits for total disability. Some vereins made arrangements for free medical service to members. After that came free loans and other benefit features.

As soon as the organization was well established it split. As soon as the seceding section had all, or most, of its benefits running, it split. And so on. The splits may have been a healthy method of propagation, as in amoeba, but healthy or unhealthy, they seem endemic among *landsmanshaften* to this day.

A fertile cause of splits was family feuds. During the first years in America everyone from your home town was your brother, everyone from your *gubernia* was your cousin. But after a few years in the verein, during a heated debate, Joe remembered that his mother never liked Jake's mother and that she had called Jake *"Yankel der Shmutz."* Natural that he should lapse into the old appellative. Jake remembered that in *his* family Joe was called *"Yosele Nuchshlepper."* Then the feud was back in circulation. Eventually the other members of the society took sides and a split was in the making.

Religion, as always, created some schisms. Not that there were arguments on the-

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ology—not unhappy arguments, anyway—but the social complications of the *Aliyahs* could cause trouble.

All of the Torah, understand, is holy. All of the Torah must be read each year, a portion each day. Some chapters became socially more holy than others. Grandpa Berl, whose piety, learning, and position in the shul were beyond question, sneered at the differences in the portions. But most people worried about them.

The first chapter of the day is read by the *Kohen*. The second chapter belongs to the *Levi*. The third chapter is *Shalishi* and a special *mitzvah* to the man who says the *bruchah* over it. A famous visitor might be asked to read it, or a very learned man, as a mark of respect. Or a rich man who contributes for the privilege.

Further down in the day's portion is *Shishi,* the sixth reading and second best part. And last is *Maftir,* usually saved for the Bar Mitzvah *yingele*. The plain folk read the *Aliyahs* left over between the three specials. Every day there is an unspoken competition for the good *Aliyahs,* every day a decision as to who gets them. And every day someone is disappointed. Eventually this led to a split.

Does a dead man care where in the cemetery he lies? Well, his relatives do. Eventually this led to a split.

Does the society know whether Brother Levy is well enough to go back to work—and off the sick benefit? Brother Levy knows—and some *machers* in the verein think they know. Eventually this led to a split.

And who is responsible for the young people not joining the society? Who will make a better president, Brother Grossman or Brother Gross? Shall we have knishes or kreplach at the next banquet? Shall we allow the Republicans, Democrats, Socialists, Trotskyites, Lovestoneites, Zionists, Poale Zionists, Freelanders, Vegetarians, Shachtmanites, Cannonites, Fieldites to speak at the meeting? Eventually all these lead to splits.

TAKE the case of the Kanliper. Kanlip is a small, Jewish town in Bessarabia. In the old days it had a population of one thousand. Some two hundred Kanliper came to America. The original group was too small to start its own shul so some worshiped with the Kishinever shul and some with another Bessarabian congregation. But they were not at ease with the people from the big town and they worried that they would lose their identity as Kanliper. So the Kanliper Benevolent and Sick Benefit Society of New York was born.

The Kanliper B&SBS of NY was a fine society. It did a good job. Then there was a fight. One old timer thinks it had to do with an old Kanlip quarrel between the partisans of two rabbis. Anyway, there was a split. And the Independent Kanliper Benevolent and Sick Benefit Society of New York was born.

The original Kanliper didn't take this secession lying down. By constitutional amendment, duly passed at two meetings, with proper notification of the vote to be taken given to all members, the name of the original organization was changed to the First Kanliper Benevolent, etc.

The Independents were radicals, in an organizational sense, of course, and having tasted schism, fell prey to it again. This time it was over cemetery allocations. And the Progressive Kanliper Circle was formed.

The inclusion of the words "circle" and "progressive" in the title was an indication of the way things were going.

The Progressives were an unstable bunch. They split even before they had time to settle down and pay sick benefits. The Progressives were victims of a common error among early *landsmanshaften*. They thought that ideas, comradeship, discussions were more important than benefits. They aren't. After the split half the society went back to the Independents because they were too small to buy a cemetery and besides they felt lonely. The other half joined the Workmen's Circle, which had a cemetery, and became Kanliper Progressive Branch #000.

In the reunited Independents all was serene for a while. Until a particularly hot election. The group that was counted out in the fight for the presidency claimed foul and seceded. And the United Kanliper B&SBS of NY was born.

By this time the original incorporators, mostly in the First and Independent, were getting old and dying off. New members weren't coming in fast enough to make up for the losses. So an organizational *shadchen* was brought in and the original society and

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its first-born were reunited. Neither group would concede the use of the other's name. And the Kanliper-Bessarabian Society was born.

The story of the Kanliper is typical, except for one thing. Neither the original society, nor any of its offspring, had "Young Men's" in its name. So many societies proudly carry those words as part of the title, even when the youngest member is a grandfather. We are a patriarchal grouping, we Jews, and it may have been a symbol of revolt from the old order, or of new freedom in a new land, or a selling point for new members, to include "Young Men's" in the title. The Kanliper slipped up.

For the arithmetical minded who might be worried about the decreasing numbers with each split: it's nothing to worry about. The original verein had one hundred and fifty members. Each division was followed by a flurry of organizing zeal. And soon both halves had one hundred and fifty members. And so it goes, with the membership of each splinter verein somehow numbering one hundred and fifty, more or less.

NO ONE remembers when the first society was formed. Some of the old German and Austrian societies, the Noah Society comes to mind, are more than one hundred years old. So no one remembers who had the first constitution. But there seems to have always been Jewish groups with a set of by-laws. When new organizations were formed the constitution committee went shopping. They asked the Kishinever for a look at theirs, they asked the Pinsker, the Minsker, the Borditcher, and the Radomysheler. They reported back the best parts of each as the finest, most liberal, most democratic constitution in any *landsmanshaft*. Oddly, all the constitutions are alike.

After the constitution was adopted—it was promptly lost. This is not a canard. With one hundred to two hundred members, and money tight, do you print copies of the constitution? The secretary carries it. But what with dues books and minutes and communications and ledgers and registered letters to delinquent members and the kids at home making a *mish-mash* of everything, how can you expect him to have the constitution when the next secretary takes over? So it's lost. What's so terrible?

Not only are we Jews a patriarchal society, we are a legalistic one. The People of the Book, the Keepers of the Law, the Children of the Covenant. So try to run an organization where the constitution (unhappily lost) is constantly invoked and the only appeal is to the memory of the disputants. *Ach*, the points of order.

The United States has a written constitution. Great Britain has an unwritten constitution. The vereins have memorized constitutions. This gives rise to a peculiar form of "protocol." Under *landsman* "protocol" you do whatever you wish, in a parliamentary sense, without regard for Robert's, Cushman's, or Congressional Rules of Order. If challenged you prove your correctness by the constitution of the society.

It would appear that under this system of "protocol" the older members would have a decided advantage because they were around—or could say they were around—when the constitution was adopted. It's not so. Actually, membership in the verein is divided into three classes. Smallest group are the *zitzer*, maybe about ten per cent. They come to meetings fairly regularly, sit in back of the room and never say a word. They like the atmosphere, the sound of Jewish forensics. It's *haimish* and a lot cheaper than the movies for *chapen a driml* —catching a nap.

The second group is made up of young members forced to join by family pressure—usually the wife's family pressure—and of *arufgearbeter* too rich or busy to attend. They pay dues and never come to meetings.

Third and largest group is the *redner*. They are all lawyers—expert constitutional, admiralty, brief, and trial counselors—without benefit of bar. Study the backgrounds of the great pleaders of our day. Either they are verein members, or sons of verein members, or they sat next to verein members in law school.

Another aspect of "protocol" has to do with language. Constitutions, laws, and verein are serious, therefore formal, business. Formal business requires formal language. And formal language in a Yiddish-speaking verein means getting as close to German as is understandable to the members.

In the Yiddish-speaking locals of a trade union or the Workmen's Circle it's all right for the chairman to announce the passage of

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a motion with, *"Es iz beshlosen gevoren. . . ."* In the verein, unless he's a *grubbe ying*, he says, *"Es vurde beshlosen. . . ."*

The business meeting follows a pattern also. The chairman opens the meeting with, *"In numen der Progressive. . . ."* The *sekretar* reads the *protokolen.* (A very handy word. This time it means minutes.) The *finantz sekretar* reads bills and communications—mostly requests for contributions. Then the first member gets up and complains.

Most of the complaints, and most of the business of the meetings, have to do with the cemetery or sick benefits. Few of the societies allocate plots in the verein cemetery. Plots are on a first-come-first-serve basis. That means that a bad spot—against a fence or overlooking a dump or factory—might fall to the uncle of an important, or loud, member. This can lead to two types of discussion: for the uncle and against. The nephew has a complaint: after all, the uncle was one of the first arrivals from the old country and a charter member of the verein. On the other hand, if uncle is given a good spot out of turn, then someone else is sure to complain—shall we allow such favoritism?

As for sick benefit problems, remember these are democratic organizations—no secrets can be withheld from the members. If a man collects sick benefit, it's no crime. But if, on the other hand, a member wants to know where the society's money is going, it's no crime either. So they talk about the man, the money, and the sickness.

There are no malingerers on the society's sick benefit roles. The convalescences are long enough—but not too long. But it's better if a man stays home while he's collecting benefits. If he should happen to walk to the corner for a paper and to see if his legs have firmed up, at the next meeting there will be a member sitting on the aisle who won't bother to ask for the floor but will merely remark to his neighbor, "He's still collecting benefit? I saw him myself on the street." Since the neighbor will be deaf, the member will have to shout. The business meeting is rushed through, but not at the expense of discussion. Everyone who wants to, speaks. After the meeting, the members play pinochle and sometimes a casino. It's a hard way to make a dollar.

One phase of verein life has passed. Somewhere, somehow, the societies picked up the idea of fancy ritual and secret passwords. Rituals are the same in any lodge or society, a bit silly, a bit boring. But secret passwords in Yiddish, they're like potato latkes, untranslatable. (Potato pancakes never taste the same as potato latkes.) For instance: *Kugel auf Shabes* is a fine password. We used it a lot in the Kishinever. But it sounds silly as "Hoecake for Saturday." And try translating (spiritually, not literally) *"Gut Morgen Reb Chaim"* or *"Di Rebitzen trugt a grinem shaitel."* It's too bad they don't use passwords any more.

THE fact that societies all have annual elections for officers is not, necessarily, proof of their democracy. The real reason for the maximum twelve-month period between elections is banquets. If you didn't have elections every year, you couldn't have installations every year. And if you didn't have an installation, how could you have an installation banquet? Can you have *banketen glat in der velt arein?*—just so?

The elections are bitterly fought, except for the offices of financial secretary and recording secretary. Candidates for recording secretary are scarce and are often co-opted rather than nominated. The recording secretary sits up front and takes and reads minutes of the meetings. He needs a clear head and hand and an agile pen. He must come to all meetings, understand what people say. But he never gets a chance to do any talking himself because he's always one man behind in recording the minutes. For some reason most recording secretaries are insurance men.

The *finantz sekretar* is a character. The constitution says he holds office for twelve months, but the normal term is for life or during the period of good behavior and health. He collects dues, keeps books, receives and answers mail, and advises on all money transactions. He has a large, heavy brief case given to him by the verein on the occasion of his 10th anniversary in office. On his 25th anniversary he gets an inscribed wristwatch. When he dies or retires the new *sekretar* inherits the old brief case.

The *finantz sekretar's* job requires a lot of night work on the books and correspondence. For this he gets a semi-nominal fee. It usually runs between one and two dollars

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per member per year. With the fee he gets standing, prestige, and a reputation as a shrewd businessman. He also gets all the headaches proper to a man working for one hundred and fifty bosses. To be sure the treasurer is the official keeper of the moneys, but that's merely honorary. The checks are signed by the treasurer and the financial secretary. If the society has had an unhappy experience, the checks are signed by the treasurer, the financial secretary, and the president. As a part-time employee of the organization, the *sekretar* takes care of the investments. Once a year he goes to the bank and buys some US bonds. Sometimes he cashes a bond. Practically a "Wall Streetnik"—therefore the adviser on finance to all members.

The other officers are as in any organization. Sometimes a born leader will hold on to the presidency for a number of years. But he has to fight for the office every year. There is one peculiarity of the verein presidency. Normally the president of a verein is a native or the son of a native of the name town of the organization—a Minsker is president of the Minsker, a Lodzer is president of the Lodzer, etc. When the president is a non-native of the old-country town, he's always a Bessarabian.

How can that be? Well, Bessarabians are gregarious, born leaders, expert organizers, and administrators. (It so happens the author is a Bessarabian.) When a Bessarabian marries into a Minsker, Pinsker, Bialystoker family he might, out of desire to see the world or please his father-in-law, join his in-laws' verein. Chances are he'll become president.

THE *aktivitet* of a verein is often determined by the women's auxiliary. As befits an organization that started in a shul, the regular society is for men only. Some radical groups allow women into regular membership, but it's not a good idea. They vote the way their husbands vote anyway. So what do you need them for? Let them have an auxiliary.

The auxiliary meets the same night as the parent verein. It makes it easier for the men to get away. The auxiliary usually has a lot more business to take care of—and less complaints—than does the society. Mostly, it's raising money. Or preparing for a *banket*. They raise money for the old home town, they raise money for *yesoimim* (orphans), for an old folks home, for Eretz Yisroel, and sometimes just to be raising money. They make *banketen* for installations, for the *sekretar* on his tenth and twenty-fifth anniversaries, for any member on his fiftieth or sixtieth birthday, for the member who brought in the most new members, for the *prezidenteche* of the auxiliary. And they make *banketen* to raise money.

Today the old areas of verein concentration are gone, they've moved uptown. The Forward Building is the last stronghold in the deep East Side. They've moved up Second Avenue and into Academy Hall on Union Square. And there's a well-established beachhead in the Times Square area in the Fraternal Clubhouse.

But, uptown or downtown, they still argue the same questions. Sick benefits have receded a bit in importance since the amounts are small and most members have additional coverage through the Blue Cross and the ILGWU and Amalgamated health plans. But the cemeteries have become more important than ever. The members are older and closer to dying.

Most of the verein cemeteries were bought long ago. Many were bought with overambitious ideas of future growth and need. The postwar boom in all real estate, especially cemetery land, has made some vereins rich landholders. There may be only one hundred members left, only a couple of hundred dollars in the bank, but they may own thirty thousand or forty thousand dollars worth of cemetery land. They're big shots.

On the other hand some vereins underbought on plots. Now they have to buy more land. Aside from the financial considerations, the new cemeteries raise another problem. Out of superstition or some obscure religious reason, a cemetery must have a body in it. But it's not particularly good luck to be the first inhabitant. So, immediately after taking title to a new cemetery, the members scurry around looking for a body. If you're looking for a bargain in a cemetery plot, and have a body to put in it, you can get the first plot of a verein cemetery for almost nothing.

The *gemilis chasudim* (literally a favor which cannot be repaid, therefore the only holy favor, used to designate the society's free loan) still does business. Someone al-

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ways needs money. There is no questioning of these loans and no recriminations in the very rare case when a loan turns sour.

Periodically all the Galitzianer societies, all the Bukoviner vereins, etc., get together and form federations. It's a constant challenge to anyone with organizational sense, especially a Bessarabian, to get all the societies into a monster verein. The federations usually appear in response to a call for help from the old country—after a pogrom, a fire, a war, a famine. The federations raise enormous amounts of money, ship boatloads of food and clothing, then fall to quarreling. So they split too.

Every Jewish son has stories to tell about the old man's verein. He has heard them during the long arguments while Pop was trying to get him to join. It's hard for a father to believe that when he dies his children will have no ties to the old place. Mostly Pop uses the wrong arguments. A cemetery is meaningless to someone in his 20's. The sick benefits are low. But Pop somehow never tells him that the verein was more than a sickness and burial society. He doesn't tell his son that the vereins *were* Jewish life for thirty or forty years; that they were the Jewish immigrant's unique self-created, self-administered agency of protection in a harsh, new world. But that argument probably wouldn't work either.

Some of the young folks join up. It's good for business, it pleases the old folks. But most young people do not join the verein, even if Pop offers to pay all the dues. The Elks, Masons, Moose, Knights, etc., have nicer clubhouses. *Ach*, America.

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CEDARS OF LEBANON

PORTRAIT OF A HEBRAIST

"Reb Benjamin" Through Yiddishist Eyes

J. J. TRUNK

BETWEEN the two world wars, Jewish Poland was the scene of competing cultural tendencies, where Yiddishist and Hebraist came to grips at every opportunity and on every level, through rival educational systems, publishing houses, political and social organizations, and in the folk, radical, and Zionist movements, where adherents of the two camps ran into the thousands. Partisanship was extreme; but an essential objectivity and humor, permitting all kinds of distortion and even personal malice when necessary, yet made it possible for the partisan of one ideology to be impressed by the devotion and integrity of his opponents.

It is against this general background of partisanship tempered with charity that the following excerpt may best be read. The author was himself a Marxian Bundist and a Yiddishist, at an opposite ideological pole from the old-fashioned rationalism and Hebraist "classicism" of Benjamin Katzenelson and his cronies; but though the author makes fun of their antiquated liberalism, it is always affectionate fun.

J. J. TRUNK was born in Poland in 1887 and is at present living in New York City. This selection is from the sixth volume of his autobiographical work, *Poland*, of which the first three volumes have already been published and the fourth and fifth are now in the process of publication. Mr. Trunk is the author of numerous books of short stories, essays, poetry, literary, political, and cultural criticism. Benjamin Katzenelson, the subject of this memoir, was the author of a Hebrew satire, *Olelot Ephraim*, as well as of the poetic history, *Judah Ha-Makkabi*, to which Mr. Trunk refers.

The Hebrew journal *Ha-Doar* has pointed out in its issue of February 11, 1949 that Mr. Trunk's memory betrayed him on some of the details of his account. The selection published here has been translated from the Yiddish by Jacob Sloan.—ED.

REB BENJAMIN was the "idler," if one may use the term, in this energetic household. He gave one the impression of being useless when it came to earning a living, and totally ignorant of everything that was going on in the house outside of his Hebrew verses which literally ran into the thousands, beautifully contrived according to the strict and merciless laws of meter and iambus.

Just how Reb Benjamin maintained his household before his children grew up and the Katzenelson school came into being was a mystery. Rumor had it that in his younger days Reb Benjamin Katzenelson had been a Hebrew teacher in Lodz, and his wife and children had been in dire straits. Apparently the arrow that sped so straight and true from his bow in the field of Hebrew hyperbole flew awry in the practical world. But who remembered those days? Only Madame Katzenelson—when she was in a good mood and well-disposed, all the household and the numerous guests requiring no attention for the moment—she was the only one who would pass a rare, shrewd comment revealing all that the family had gone through in Lodz when Reb Benjamin was the breadwinner.

But all that belonged to the past. At the time of which I am writing, the school was the source of a good living both for the

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Katzenelsons and their many friends, and Reb Benjamin was able to live entirely within the four walls of his rhymes.

And that he did. Physiognomically, Reb Benjamin Katzenelson resembled the vestigial remains of one of those old Lithuanian *maskilim* in whom Torah and Enlightenment went hand and hand. He was a tall man, thin, gray-haired, and with a broad, scholarly brow. On his longish, pointed nose there almost always rested a pair of old, broken spectacles, over whose broken lenses Reb Benjamin was always peering—always, that is, except when he was reading or writing.

There was not a tooth left in his mouth. To make up for this lack he had a gray, reddish beard that shook constantly on his lower lip. Whenever Reb Benjamin spoke—and it so happened that he was fond of speaking, loud and violently—his beard would tremble in harmony with his words.

In this almost collectivistic household, Reb Benjamin was the only one who kept apart from all that was happening around him. It was no wonder; for Reb Benjamin was never unoccupied. In addition to his studies, he was busy on his gigantic life work: namely, the translation of Graetz's (German) *History of the Jews* into perfect, classic Hebrew verse.

When it was that Reb Benjamin began this translation and where the first dozen reams of this work were, was something that neither Reb Benjamin nor anyone else in the world knew. It was impossible to orient oneself in the vast sea of paper and verse. The beginnings of his opus must have been lying somewhere in an attic or under the mountains of dust behind the bookcase. Complete generations of mice must have satisfied their hunger with Reb Benjamin's verses, and probably knew them all by heart. Everyone had long ago forgotten reams of what he had written—including Reb Benjamin himself. He had no time to remember them. For, aside from the fact that this was Reb Benjamin's life work, he had just begun on Graetz. It's no light matter, this turning of a weighty sage into fine Hebrew measure. The years haste on in full career. Meanwhile, Reb Benjamin becomes a grandfather many times over. He dares not spare the quill. He sits over his work, literally day and night, days at the window, nights at the lamp. The half-broken spectacles rest on his nose. The house might be in a turmoil—Reb Benjamin is oblivious. He writes on and on—and the perfectly measured verses run swiftly from his pen, like hens let out of a coop.

Every once in a while Reb Benjamin would feel an urge to see his verse in print. He would see his son Isaac's work published; although he must have known that Isaac was a greater poet than himself, he would be moved to submit his verses to the public eye, as well.

To have printed all that Reb Benjamin wrote would have required the decimation of forests and the establishment of huge printing presses. But during the time when I used to visit the Katzenelsons a fragment of Reb Benjamin's titanic translation of Graetz did see the light of day. His children published a small pamphlet of Reb Benjamin's sonorous verses. There were only about fifteen or twenty pages in all, but Reb Benjamin made up for the brevity of the selection by composing a preface and postscript, full of apologies to the honored reader for the translator's parsimony. In these appendices Reb Benjamin reckoned with the critics, sharply and in advance. Should they be so bold as to plunge their teeth into his labor of love, Reb Benjamin belabored them beforehand. The critics were described as "the filth of the human race," "pissers against the wall," and "daubers with whited plaster." Every execration that the Prophets had meted out in the Bible to those who denied the living God, Reb Benjamin hurled at the audacious heads of the critics.

Yet, although he seemed always to be immersed in the superior realms and never troubled a fly in this inferior world of ours, Reb Benjamin had enemies—one might put it, enemies to the death. In the very midst of his composition, when one might have imagined that thunder and lightning could not have penetrated Reb Benjamin's ears, it was enough for someone in the house merely to breathe the names of his two enemies. Reb Benjamin would at once begin to quiver. His bearded lip would shake, and he would scream with rage.

The names of Reb Benjamin's two enemies were Feodor Dostoevsky and Mel-

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ech Ravitsh. He never did forgive Dostoevsky as long as he lived. For Dostoevsky had made it seem in his *House of the Dead* that Jews wear phylacteries on Sabbath eve. Reb Benjamin could not stomach such ignorance and ill manners in a Gentile. Dostoevsky could very well have asked a rabbi, or looked into the Talmud or the *Shulhan Aruch,* before undertaking to describe Jews wearing phylacteries!

Reb Benjamin had a score to settle with Melech Ravitsh, too. Someone had once done a foolish thing and showed Reb Benjamin a copy of Melech Ravitsh's long poem entitled "The Jewish People: Songs of Love and Hate." Reb Benjamin didn't notice the word "love," but the "hate" immediately caught his eye. That was the end of Melech Ravitsh, as far as Reb Benjamin was concerned. The moment he heard a mention of Ravitsh's name, he would begin to pound the table and shout, *"Meshugener!* (Madman!)."

He had a name for me, too—*treyfener beyn* (rascal). That was because of my Bundism. Reb Benjamin Katzenelson argued that a Jew who knew Hebrew and wasn't a complete ignoramus when it came to the Talmud, either, and could talk himself into being a Bundist, was nothing more nor less than a *treyfener beyn.*

Very rarely, when he was in a particularly good mood, Reb Benjamin would relax from his prodigious labors, and write Yiddish poetry. One hot summer day I came to visit Isaac Katzenelson. It so happened that old Madame Katzenelson was not in Lodz at the time. She had suffered from a severe siege of rheumatism, and the doctors had ordered her to Tzechoshinek to take the famous mud baths. In the hall I encountered Reb Benjamin. He took me cautiously by the hand, led me into a side room, closed the door behind him, and said, *"Treyfener beyn,* now I shall read you what I've written in *jargon."*

He took out a sheet of paper and began to read. It was a long poem in the old-fashioned style, à la Song of Songs. A shepherdess was tending her sheep in the field of Sharon. A shepherd was sitting somewhere off on a high hill, longing for his love and playing on the flute.

When Reb Benjamin had finished reading, he asked me, "Well, *treyfener beyn,* and what do I mean by this?"

"The meaning is clear," I replied. "The shepherdess is your wife. The fields of Sharon are the mud baths of Tzechoshinek. You yourself are the heartsick shepherd. The flute is the poem in *jargon."*

Reb Benjamin's beard began to shake vehemently. He looked at me over his half-broken spectacles and said hastily, *"Treyfener beyn,* you hit the nail on the head!"

The doors of the Katzenelson household were always open, and it was the scene of several literary salons. All the young authors of Lodz, including even the "Young Yiddishists" headed by Moses Brozerson, who were in the midst of a bitter campaign against the "classicists," came to see Isaac Katzenelson. An armistice had been proclaimed in the Katzenelson household.

There was a literary salon surrounding Reb Benjamin, too. It consisted of the old *maskilim,* one-time Hebrew writers who still wrote in the magazines *Ha-Magid* and *Ha-Melitz*—names that had been on every tongue during the period of the Enlightenment. The generation that had worshiped them lay buried in the cemeteries of Poland and Lithuania. The current of the times had borne these authors to Lodz; they were like the trunks that remain in a ravaged forest. Old, desolate, forgotten, they came to the Katzenelsons to drink a glass of tea and talk about the old bygone days and to engage in dialectics with Reb Benjamin over a question of grammar or the interpretation of a difficult biblical verse or a moot question in the Talmud.

One of these forgotten men and one who would sit at the Katzenelsons for days on end and into the night, and practically belonged to the household, was Meyer Funner.

It was as hard to tell exactly how old Meyer Funner was as it is to tell the age of a mummy at a glance. Meyer Funner resembled a drowned body rescued from a watery grave where it has been lying for generations. He was the embodiment of the vanity of all human hopes for survival; his whole physiognomy was a revelation of the meaning of human decline and the proof of mortality. All the vital juices had dried up in him, as in a shrunken tree. His dark skin was drawn taut like parchment over the

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skeleton of his body, which was no more than a collection of bones. The longish shard of a head resembled a skull which some archaeologist had dug up in a remote sandy wilderness. The few gray hairs which still grew on his skull added to the grotesqueness of his appearance. Funner had a gray, sparse beard and two pointed, rotten teeth in the front of his sunken mouth. He was almost always coughing and groaning. Whenever Funner spoke he coughed as though everything inside him was falling to pieces. His hands were long and green-black with age—his fingers were long, and when Funner slept they seemed to point at the air. His clothes appeared to be rotting, as though they had come out of a grave. Everything hung awkwardly on him. His shoelaces were always untied, so that he scuffled when he walked....

But Meyer Funner was full of literary ambition.

Funner wrote dramas, mostly on Biblical themes. It is hard to tell whether these dramas had any value whatsoever. What was remarkable was the fact that Funner, who was a learned man and versed in Hebrew and Hebraic metaphor, wrote a wooden and clumsy style. He had been writing constantly from his earliest youth, and he did not let off till the last day of his life. Before committing his dramas to paper—i.e., while he was still pregnant with them—Funner would act out the most dramatic scenes for us. When I first visited the Katzenelsons and heard Funner bursting with passion as he recited lines out of his play, I was literally terror-stricken. As he acted his body shook with prolonged, damp coughs. Funner stretched out his long, bony, dark fingers, like a ghost out of the world of chaos.

Meyer Funner considered himself the Hebrew Shakespeare. Though as he shuffled through the Katzenelson household in unlatched shoes he knew that every day might be his last, he steadfastly awaited the recognition of his great talents. He was fond of describing the theater that would be erected in his name in Jerusalem, where his dramas would eventually come into their own in the presence of vast audiences.

THE relationship between Meyer Funner and Reb Benjamin Katzenelson was a very curious one. Funner considered Reb Benjamin old-fashioned, and often gave him a good talking to on that subject. The two of them never conversed on any subject other than the Torah and the Enlightenment. In this respect they were both well-equipped. The climax of their conversations occurred when they arrived at the subject of Hasidism. Reb Benjamin Katzenelson was probably the last of the Polish disciples of the Vilna Gaon. He still regarded the Hasidim and Hasidism through the eyes of the Vilna Gaon and the bygone *maskilim*. Hasidim to him were either traitors to the Torah or fanatic children of darkness. Meyer Funner, on the other hand, in his role as the eternal avant-gardist and revolutionary, ardently defended the Hasidic way. Reb Benjamin Katzenelson would brandish his strongest weapon, shouting, "How can an intelligent man possibly oppose the Vilna Gaon?" Funner would begin to cough and retort that he considered the Vilna *Hon* (hen) no authority.

That was all he needed to say. Reb Benjamin's beard would begin to tremble like a tree in a storm. He would pound his fists on the table and let fly at Funner with quotations from the sages. Funner would fly right back with other quotations from the sages. The upshot would be that no one would be able to make out a word they were shouting. Reb Benjamin would wave his fists and sit down to resume his compositions. Funner would be shaken by a siege of coughing in which he threatened to cough up his innards. Eventually, Madame Katzenelson would placate Funner with a glass of hot tea, which she would set before him with a good-humored smile. Then he would shuffle into Isaac Katzenelson's room to meet the young Yiddish writers.

It was a source of great satisfaction to Funner to sit down with Moses Broderzon and the "Young Yiddishists." Though he thought their poetry trash, Funner was always impressed by extravagance and the principle of contrariety. He couldn't take much part in their fiery conversations, but his eyes would burn in his dark skull when he finally succeeded in diverting the conversation to talk of bygone days. Then, coughing and groaning, he would speak of women whose hearts he had once broken, peppering his reminiscences with tidbits of literary gossip.

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THE second of Benjamin Katzenelson's close friends, Karlofsky, came very seldom. He was a paralytic elderly bachelor who was bedridden. Every once in a while, his disciple and aide, Shemayah Zimmerman, would dress him, carry him downstairs, set him in a droshke, and drive him off to the Katzenelsons.

To Karlofsky, his visit to the Katzenelsons was the one happy day in his paralyzed year, one which he looked forward to from the pillows of his bed. But Reb Benjamin, despite his delight at the infrequent visits of an old friend who had been a brilliant scholar in the yeshiva in Volozhin, it was a painful occasion. He didn't dare to scream or pound the table, though every word Karlofsky spoke threw him into a rage. Reb Benjamin knew that Karlofsky was a paralytic who doctors said would be placed in mortal danger by the slightest excitement. Karlofsky might, God forbid, breathe out his last in Reb Benjamin's house if Reb Benjamin were to utter a word in opposition—and Reb Benjamin might have in his old age to bear a human life on his conscience, God forbid. Reb Benjamin spent most of the visit biting his tongue, as he listened to Karlofsky, sitting opposite him on a chair converted into a bed, hurling brimstone and fire at the Jewish faith and people.

Apparently the paralytic's tongue was steeped in the sayings of the sage of blessed memory, whom he reviled and mocked. For every Amora or Tana that came to Karlofsky's lips was subjected to another invidious appellation. In addition, he poured forth a constant stream of angry invective at the Jewish people. Reb Benjamin Katzenelson would practically burst. He would bite his fists to keep quiet. At the height of his rage, Karlofsky would subside into a faint, and his eyes would glaze over, as though he were on the verge of death. Then his disciple, Shemayah Zimmerman, would wrap him in a warm blanket, both winter and summer, drive him home in a droshke, and lay him back in bed, where he would remain until next Yom Kippur or the next visit to the Katzenelsons. . . .

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ON THE HORIZON

THE FOLK REVIVAL IN JEWISH MUSIC

A Report on the 1948-49 Season

KURT LIST

TO THE casual observer, the 1948-49 season of Jewish music seemed no doubt a remarkably prosperous one. Numerous concerts, recordings, first performances, new composers, publications, all gave the impression of a lively activity which, in proportion to the size of its audience, surpassed that in American music by far.

Among the concerts, the annual festival activities of the National Jewish Music Council, which is sponsored by the National Jewish Welfare Board, made the biggest splash. The highlights of this festival, which took place in February and March 1949, were: the opening "Salute to Israel Day"; a transcribed radio program, "The New Road," broadcast by the major networks and also beamed abroad to Europe, the Middle East, and Latin America; a concert at Carnegie Hall of excerpts from the opera *Hechalutz* by Jacob Weinberg; and a New York YMHA presentation of A. W. Binder's oratorio *Israel Reborn*.

Of these works, "The New Road" radio program made the least claim to the status of a musical composition. It is essentially a dramatic montage, written in English, Hebrew, and Yiddish, relating the experiences of DP's on their way to Palestine. The action takes place against a musical background arranged by several composers, among them Leah M. Jaffa, and is occasionally interrupted by the singing of a folk tune. The background music was put together in a way reminiscent of Hollywood musical-montage technique, although with less skill. Most significant, however, was its lavish and quite indiscriminate use of a great variety of the folk tunes heard today among the Israeli. A similar, if somewhat more professional, use of folk music also characterized Mr. Weinberg's opera and Mr. Binder's oratorio. The tunes were arranged, in each case, in what amounted to a garland of single melodies, patching the composition together, with no structural coherence beyond that of the plot.

The folk tune style also marked numerous other works performed during the past season. Among these the oratorio *Ruth*, by Mordecai Sandberg, given in New York's Town Hall, and the concert performance of David Tamkin's opera *The Dybbuk*, by the Portland Symphony Orchestra, attracted the most attention—mainly, perhaps, because of the large performing apparatus involved.

OBVIOUSLY the current emphasis on folk music is due in great part to Jewish nationalist feeling. Oratorio and opera offer the easiest vehicles for expressing such sentiments in music, since plot and stagecraft will often disguise poverty of musical thought, and the folk tune can be counted on to rouse the audience's political emotions. Significantly, though some of the compositions mentioned above had been written years ago (Tamkin's slick mixture of Hasidic tunes

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KURT LIST here reports on the 1948-49 Jewish music season, and tries to assess the promise—for the sound future development of Jewish music in America—of the major trend he noted in the past twelve months: the predominance of the "folk music" of Israel. Mr. List is the editor of the music magazine *Listen*, and a frequent contributor to these pages.

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and Hollywood orchestration was composed as early as 1933), they found their way to larger audiences and public approval only in the year in which the Jewish state became a reality; the composers had apparently anticipated their audiences by many years.

And so it went all season. A presentation of folk and liturgical songs given under the auspices of the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation in Chicago; a song recital by Sidor Belarsky at Carnegie Hall; a string quartet by Yehudi Wyner, played in honor of Cantor Moshe Rudinow by the Society for the Advancement of Judaism; an orchestral-vocal concert by the Kinom Sinfonietta at the Brooklyn Museum; several chamber pieces by Moshe Rudinow, A. W. Binder, Lazar Weiner, Reuven Korsokoff, and the Israeli composer Ben Haim, all offered by the Jewish Music Forum; a number of folk songs presented by the school of Jewish Studies in New York's Town Hall; the performance of the Israeli composer Mahler-Kalkstein's *Folk Symphony* by the Columbus Symphony Orchestra; and a program of Hebrew concert music and folk dances given by students from Hunter College, Columbia University, and Brooklyn College—all these concerts were committed wholly to "populist" sentimentality and the nationalistic use of folk music. The specific material itself may have varied from concert to concert, but the emphasis and application remained almost the same throughout.

Under these conditions the interfaith musical program, for which a variety of composers not connected with the Jewish community had previously been invited to write and which used to be a favorite project of such organizations as the Temple Emanu-El and the Park Avenue Synagogue, disappeared into the background, despite the publicity it has recently enjoyed. The Friday Eve Service of the Park Avenue Synagogue (which I discussed in COMMENTARY, February 1949) was repeated at the music festival of Columbia University; the B'nai B'rith Chorus of New York gave a concert in which selections ranged from Purcell, Lassus, and Bach, to Hindemith, Copland, and Gershwin; and a Brooklyn group of the Hadassah performed the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta *H.M.S. Pinafore* in Yiddish. This about sums up the extent to which Jewish groups tried to make contact with the music of the outside world.

IN MUSICAL competitions and recordings, likewise, the folk theme was paramount. The Music Division of the Congress for Jewish Culture instituted a prize competition (results to be announced at the music festival in December of this year) for a four-part setting of the poem "Treist Mein Folk" by J. L. Peretz; a requirement is that the music be based on Jewish motifs. The recordings offered by the Congress consisted of such albums as "M'zimrai Haaretz" (Palestine Art Cooperation), a selection of songs of "worship, labor, youth and love for the land of Israel"; "Hagana Sings" (Zimra); and "Hebrew Spirituals" (Besa), popular arrangements of Hasidic melodies sung by Cantor Leib Glantz.

Most disappointing was the output of the much heralded Israel Music Foundation, which had originally announced ambitious plans for research, recordings, publication of music, the maintenance of a reference library of Hebrew music, and the granting of exchange scholarships for American and Israeli music students. The concrete results of its initial efforts were several record releases that featured mainly folk-music arrangements by the Israeli composer Marc Lavry, in settings usually labelled "semi-classical," and an album of so-called folk tunes called "Songs of the Defenders of Israel."

Obviously, one must make allowances for the current nationalist fever. One can even say that under certain critical political conditions abstract musical propositions may well have to take a back seat temporarily. But what is dangerous in the present situation is that nationalism seems already to have solidified into a full-fledged and permanent musical practice with a full battery of theoretical apologetics to back it up. Folk music has by now the weight of a twenty- to thirty-years' "tradition" in Jewish music; and in its support we have been told over and over not only that the practice follows the precedent set by the great masters of Western music, but that folk tunes are the primal source of music.

Now even if the claim that folk music is closer to the origin of music itself were correct, that still would not make folk songs legitimate today. Since modern art has shifted its center to urban experience, rural themes have chiefly a reminiscent significance; and by the same token, folk art, confined in its creative aspects to the countryside and no

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longer able to draw fresh impulses from modern society, has ceased to develop. It has remained frozen into forms that belong to previous centuries, alien in its spirit to modern life and style, and quite exhausted as a source of inspiration. And the situation in Israel is further complicated because of the nature of the Israeli folk song, which, as I shall show later, is a hybrid reflecting the contributions of the various *aliyahs,* or waves of immigration, along with a local Oriental influence. Despite the closer identification of town and country in Israel, the gap between the art of the two is still not bridged, because the Israeli composer borrows his folk music from the experience of foreign countrysides, and this has little to do with Israel's own effort toward unified national life.

But arguments such as these have been heard before. And in their face, it will still be argued that folk music has been the chief inspirational source of the great masters of music.

It is true that folk material has been employed in a great deal of the art music of the past; but we know of no instance where this folk material itself was not already shaped stylistically by *high* urban art before its incorporation into art music. In using folk music the masters actually used something that was the product of their own styles. Essentially, the use of folk music in high art boils down to the use of *themes,* assimilated into high style. In general, the tendency of music from the early Middle Ages up to the 19th century is away from the national folk in the direction of the internationalization of musical language. This is not only true of a Europe that did not yet know national states: it becomes even more obvious when such states appear. The Lutheran chorale, which is interpreted by some as folk material, has its roots in Italian music. The Flemish composer Willaert's influence on the Venetian school, Bach's dependence on the Frenchman Couperin, Mozart's working in both the German and Italian mediums (in musical style as well as text), are some of the most significant examples of the internationalizing tendency. And even folk music itself is in a sense not regionally or nationally limited, since it, too, is drawn from the universality of the human situation.

It was the excess of nationalism emerging together with the great revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries that brought about the regional division of folk music and its use for political purposes. Haydn was perhaps the last great master to use folk music out of the personal experience of his own background; he himself was the offspring of peasants and he spent many years in semi-rural Eisenstadt. Haydn stands at the crossroads. He uses folk material from his personal experience, but he does so for extraneous political purposes. The typical composer of the era of Enlightenment, he rejected the courtly *style galante,* and we perceive that with him the inclusion of peasant tunes and rhythms was a democratic gesture in defiance of the artificiality of the aristocrats. Here for the first time the regional and the rural become transformed into a political gesture.

The later romantics no longer have any personal contact with the folk experience. For them the use of folk music is partly an affectation, partly an expansion of their tonal means; in many cases, however, it is adopted merely as a way of paying respect to a foreign patron. Beethoven uses a Russian song in one of his Rasumovsky Quartets, which were dedicated to a Russian nobleman. Schubert, spending a summer in the Burgenland, becomes enthusiastic about native melodies. Schumann and Mendelssohn employ folk tunes as part of an essentially literary program. Liszt and Brahms devote a great deal of their work to the exploration of Hungarian and Gypsy tunes. Finally, Puccini goes further by trying to incorporate Oriental technical devices in his work.

All these examples have two things in common: (1) the material used is assimilated to the composer's style to such a degree that its original form often becomes unrecognizable; (2) the exotic flavor introduced allows the composer to expand the traditional means of expression.* Standing on the brink of a deci-

*Further evidence of what is here contended to be the meaning of folk material in the art of the romantics can be found in the total disappearance of the folk tune in Wagner, a composer who discovered that the boundaries of tonality could be extended through the inherent tonal means of chromaticism without the introduction of any extraneous elements. Conversely, in Mahler we find a return to the folk tune as a means of bringing order into the vast expanses of tonality. Here the folk tune is introduced as an extraneous element, but in order to prevent a disruption of tonality.

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sive break with tonality, these sensitive composers enriched their styles by a daring use of foreign elements: this was an experiment that pointed toward the dissolution of tonality, but did not risk a final conscious break with it.

It is important to note that in all the cases given here, folk material was introduced as an extraneous element for purposes of aesthetic enrichment. In the tonal style this was possible without much incongruity, for the time-span of the tonal tradition—almost five hundred years—and its aesthetic similarity with modality, which preceded it, made it possible to use any folk material that had been tonal or modal, regardless of its age, without destroying the tonal style itself.

With the 20th century, however, there came one of the most sudden and revolutionary of all changes in musical development. Tonality finally breaks and expands into a completely new form of tonal relationships, in which modal or tonal melody, such as that of the folk-song, can no longer be integrated.* The enjoyment of music is now a passive, highly involved psychological process wherein the most complex methods involve the listener's interest. A necessary concomitant of this development is the heightened use of polyphonic means that exclude the preponderance of any single melody. In other words, any use of modal or tonal folk melodies is made impossible unless the material is integrated in such a manner that its melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic essence becomes subservient to the new style—which means that its original meaning is obscured. If a composer today uses a folk tune in its original meaning, as a straight homophonic melody that can count upon the active participation of the audience—whether in actual community singing, as in the chorale, or to exploit the fact that the listener immediately recognizes the theme because it is familiar—he puts a serious limitation upon the modern style.

While the use of folk music in the past tended to internationalize musical language and expand musical style, the use of it today tends only to sectionalize music and contract its means. It is of no avail to appeal to history here; the encouragement of folk music in art music has *today* a parochializing effect directly contrary to its effect in the past, and parochialization is the enemy of art.

There remains one more important historical aspect of the use of folk music. In the 19th century, the Slavic countries of Europe, most notably Russia and what is today Czechoslovakia, were clamoring for national, and with it cultural, independence from the West. In the course of this agitation there arose a national school of composers which, though complying basically with the tenets of Western music, gave a new flavor to its own styles by making extensive use of ancient and largely modal native folk tunes. In some Marxist interpretations, these movements for national independence were considered progressive, and therefore their musical results came by analogy to be hailed as something in the forefront of the development of art. Today, however, in the light of historical events, it would seem advisable to revise the whole notion of the intrinsic "progressive" character of the national independence movements of semi-feudal states. And in the light of what has become of nationalist music in its further development, the whole "progressiveness" of nationalist music as musical art, too, has begun to seem questionable. In any case, the most important fact here is that the whole idea of an "advanced" aesthetic joined to a "progressive" political line sprang, even in the cases of Moussorgsky and Janacek—two unquestionably very fine composers—from a political and not a musical concept. What these composers did, they did for reasons outside music. At the same time they achieved essentially nothing more, whether they knew it or not, than what the romantics had already achieved: an expansion of their style by the introduction of exotic and folkloristic means. What was and remains important in the art of both Mous-

*Alban Berg still employs a chorale in his non-tonal *Violin Concerto,* as a demonstration that his kind of music is as tradition-bound as any other. But in part the *Violin Concerto* reverts back to tonal means, in part it obliterates wholly the original meaning of the chorale. A similar tendency is also found in some of Schoenberg's works; e.g., the quotation of "Ach, du lieber Augustin" in the *Serenade,* of a Beethoven motif in the *Ode to Napoleon,* and of the "Sh'ma Yisroel" in the *Survivor from Warsaw.* In these cases a new meaning is given to the melodies quoted, a meaning that derives from the process of incorporation itself, rather than from the specific quality of the folk melody.

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sorgsky and Janacek is the personal accent.

The Slavic movement in music has proved, however, to be of the greatest importance for the Jewish composer. There are two reasons for this. First, since the idea of progressiveness was attached to this music, the Jewish composer could establish his claims to "modernity" by referring to it for his influences. Second, a great deal of Jewish folk music—part of the *nusach,* for instance, as well as the Hasidic tunes and dances—was created within the geographical orbit of Slavic culture and showed all the earmarks of Slavic style, and hence the Jewish composer was affected by it whenever he sought national sources close to home.

WHILE most of the Jewish music heard recently has been Slavic in color, a new influence has also begun to make itself felt lately—that of the specifically Israeli folk tune. The appearance of this kind of folk material has made the problem of the legitimacy of folk music in modern art even more complicated. The root of the complication lies within the very essence of the Israeli folk tune.

Palestinian music has developed so far according to sharply marked stages which parallel the different waves of immigration. Paramount is the Eastern Slavic tune of the early settlers, which later became merged with certain Oriental pattern-techniques; subsequent immigrations from Western Europe then forced this amalgam into the harmonic-cadential scheme of 19th-century romantic music. To the new immigrants, the Oriental melisma was strange at first; but it seems that the latest immigrants, especially because of their decisive rejection of all things European, have accepted the Oriental flavor.

There is much that can be said about the Israeli folk song, but only three factors are essentially important to the present discussion: (1) the Israeli folk tune, stemming largely as it does from the experience of Eastern Europe, is stuck fast in the Slavic tradition of music; (2) it is closely connected with life in Palestine itself, its work, its struggles—thus it is of necessity composed in the simplest, most accessible fashion; (3) it tends definitely towards the incorporation of basic Oriental techniques.

The first two of these factors do not put the composer who uses Israeli melodies in any different position from that of other composers using folk melodies today: as we explained above, his work runs the danger of becoming anachronistic and of avoiding aesthetic solutions. Only the third factor changes the problem. For the Oriental pattern does not aim at a psychological absorption of the music by the listener, but rather at a narcotic effect that eliminates even his passive listening participation: the listener is engulfed. Aesthetic problems do not count here; neither do the laws of historical evolution; if Oriental music develops, it does so for social reasons alone, never because of its own momentum. In the Oriental chant, the evolution of music comes to a complete standstill.

This means that by using the Israeli folk tune, the modern composer not only abdicates his responsibility of seeking an individual style and a modern musical expression, but goes so far as to abandon entirely the psychological and aesthetic assumptions of Western art. It is not surprising, therefore, to hear music—as I heard it in last season's concerts—that follows no constructive principle in the traditional Western sense, but offers instead a string of individual melodies in medley fashion without apparent coherence. In Western terms this makes no sense; but in Oriental terms, as incantation, it is admissible. And even though the American Jewish composer does not dream of narcotic magic in his compositions, his original and prime thought, which is nationalistic fervor and, together with it, the hope of exercising a spell over the listener's sympathy, has something akin to an incantational aim.

FORTUNATELY, the music of the synagogue has been affected to a lesser degree. Granted that a great deal of synagogue music is inferior and meaningless, there is still a fair amount that is musically respectable.

Indeed, the very same composers who write trite and cheap folksy music when working in the concert medium will try to turn out more ambitious and serious scores when commissioned by the synagogue. A case in point was the Sabbath Eve Service of New York's Park Avenue Synagogue, for which a number of Israeli composers wrote solid, occasionally quite inspired, and, if not overly ambitious, at least substantial scores, among which those by Ben Haim, Peter Gradenwitz, and Karl Salomon stood out. A new *Sacred Serv-*

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ice by Darius Milhaud, performed at the Temple Emanu-El at San Francisco, Lazar Weiner's *Sabbath Eve Service,* performed at New York's Central Synagogue, and repeated performances of Ernest Bloch's exquisite *Sacred Service,* revealed a more serious synagogue music. There were, of course, numerous works of lesser quality, such as those by A. W. Binder, Max Helfman, Isadore Freed, and Max Janowski, all to be heard over CBS on the "Church of the Air" program. But the fact remains that synagogue music proved at the very least to be more tolerable than Jewish concert music.

It could be pointed out, of course, that the above-mentioned events were special occasions and not necessarily indicative of the quality of music heard at ordinary services. Yet repeated visits to the Reform and semi-Reform synagogues of Baltimore, Philadelphia, Worcester, New York, Boston, and several communities on Long Island gave me a picture that essentially confirmed my impression of the greater solidity of synagogue music. As a rule, paradoxically enough, the smaller the community and the further away from New York, the more serious and substantial the musical quality. In New York itself, the attitudes of the synagogues vary, though by and large, the temples are rather too worldly to permit much serious concern with the problems of liturgical music.

In general, in this field there are the extremes of modernism and traditionalism, most ably represented by Herbert Fromm and Chemjo Vinaver respectively. In the area between, some fine work is being done by Heinrich Schalit and Gershon Ephros. These are essentially the composers who by their knowledge, talent, and insight will put the determining stamp on the future development of American synagogue music.

Evidence of the seriousness and responsibility with which the sacred side of Jewish music is handled can also be discerned in the founding of a new school in which prospective cantors are now being educated in music, liturgy, and general Jewish culture. This is the Hebrew Union School of Jewish Sacred Music, in New York, which came to life in the fall of 1948.

While it is obviously impossible to evaluate a school without having attended it, I can hazard the observation based on the roster of its teachers—which includes such well-established names in Jewish officialdom as A. W. Binder, Gershon Ephros, Jacob Weinberg, Eric Werner, and Lazare Saminsky—that while it will no doubt turn out a number of solid cantors, there is no one on its faculty to present a more modern or Western viewpoint or a more solid instruction in the craft of composition such as might lead to something beyond the folksy effusions of Mr. Binder and Mr. Weinberg. Perhaps the future growth of the school will make such additions necessary, however.

THERE were a few other gratifying signs of a possible rejuvenation of Jewish music. Among these were the première of Arnold Schoenberg's *Survivor of Warsaw* and the introduction of Erich Itor Kahn as a composer by the Jewish Music Forum and a performance of his *Actus Tragicus* in Tel Aviv.*

But these few seeds were still hardly enough to make the desert of Jewish music blossom. Not because these seeds are not important, but because there is so little fertile ground upon which they can fall. The situation as a whole is discouraging. Bad reasoning, incompetence, ambition, and, above all, political passions are about to destroy for Jews a field in which they, perhaps more than any other group of people, have excelled. And it is precisely by proclaiming their Jewishness so loudly that Jewish musicians and audiences have renounced their creative, inventive, and appreciative musical capacities. In doing so they have renounced almost the best part of their distinctive identity.

*I have already reported on the Schoenberg work in COMMENTARY, November 1948, and shall attempt a detailed evaluation of the highly important work of Mr. Kahn in one of the future issues.

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THE STUDY OF MAN

"THE AMERICAN SOLDIER" AS SCIENCE

Can Sociology Fulfil Its Ambitions?

NATHAN GLAZER

[The Emperor Frederick II] wanted to find out what kind of speech and what manner of speech children would have when they grew up, if they spoke to no one beforehand. So he bade foster mothers and nurses to suckle the children, to bathe and wash them, but in no way to prattle with them or to speak to them, for he wanted to learn whether they would speak the Hebrew language, which was the oldest, or Greek, or Latin, or Arabic, or perhaps the language of their parents, of whom they had been born. But he labored in vain, because the children all died. For they could not live without the petting and the joyful faces and loving words of their foster mothers.

—Salimbene (13th century) in the *Portable Medieval Reader*

THE ambition of American social science is to arrive at general laws of society and human behavior: laws that shall be as universal, as precise, and as useful as Newton's. Indeed, it is the conviction that it can accomplish this aim that represents much of the attraction of that vast field which now includes thousands of practitioners, tens of thousands of students, and which every year spends millions of dollars gathered from business, government, scholarly foundations, and universities.

But its every effort towards the formulation and testing of such laws has to date been frustrated. Social science has been able to present its results only in the form of specific historical statements, and not as general social and psychological laws. It can only say, "at this time and this place"—in short, in this sample—"the educated are less prejudiced," and has found no way of saying with any great confidence what the relation between education and prejudice will be at any other time or any other place—in short, in the next sample.

But the call—both from within and without—to discover general laws is so great, and the resulting frustration so intense, that it sometimes leads to what can only be called hallucinations: some social scientists begin to believe that these laws have already been discovered. For example, Stuart C. Dodd, now a professor of sociology at the University of Washington, fills his big book on *The Dimensions of Society* with formulas, and makes it look very much like a text in physics or engineering: except that the symbols in his formulas can by no stretch of the imagination be replaced by numbers, and can be applied to actual human behavior by no one, not even himself. Professor Dodd's book lies on library shelves, virtually undisturbed, but, still a respected figure, he continues to present his point of view in the various professional journals. In the Winter 1948-9 issue of the *International Journal of Opinion and Attitude Research,* we hear him saying: "Each of the three factors [leading to

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the mispredicting of elections] is measurable, [and] its share assessable. . . ." The appropriate formula is "$S = {}^{t}T^{-1}:{}_{1}L^{2}:P_{p}:I_{1}^{2}$," which means that a situation is dependent on such factors as time, location, and the number of people. But this formula rests unused in a footnote, and Professor Dodd must satisfy himself with only the symbols of science.

Our interest here, however, is not in the more exotic blooms along the borders of the social sciences, but in the central thickets themselves; not the social sciences where they leave themselves most vulnerable but where they present their strongest effort. *The American Soldier* is unquestionably such a strong effort. It has been written by Samuel A. Stouffer and many associates, and is being published by Princeton University Press. Of the projected four volumes, the first two—*Adjustment During Army Life*, by Samuel A. Stouffer, Edward A. Suchman, Leland C. DeVinney, Shirley A. Star, and Robin M. Williams, Jr., and *Combat and Its Aftermath*, by Stouffer, Arthur A. Lumsdaine, Marion Harper Lumsdaine, Robin M. Williams Jr., M. Brewster Smith, Irving L. Janis, Shirley A. Star, and Leonard S. Cottrell, Jr. ($13.50 for the two volumes)—are already published, form a single unit, and constitute the heart of the whole enterprise.

These volumes have been hailed as standing at the summit of American social science. "Never before had such modern methods of social science been employed on so large a scale, by such competent technicians . . .," says Major General Osborn, formerly director of the Information and Education division of the Army, in the introduction. And further: "In no other country could there have been found so many men with such a high level of scientific training in investigating and interpreting the behavior of human beings." The authors themselves write of their book that it contains "a mine of data, perhaps unparalleled in the history of any single research enterprise in social psychology or sociology."

The mine of data referred to was garnered through some two hundred questionnaires that the Research Branch of the Information and Education division drew up and administered to perhaps half a million soldiers all told (on the average, it would seem, 2500 men were given a single questionnaire). Not all these questionnaires were used in the writing of *The American Soldier*: only those form part of this report which deal with problems that are generally of interest to the social sciences, and those which have behind them enough data to "at least illustrate if not demonstrate the behavior thought to be involved."

We find no hallucinations in *The American Soldier*. Professor Stouffer himself is a very able man, a clear and (for the social sciences) even good writer, and he is, one is assured and stands ready to believe, a brilliant statistician (the statistical presentation throughout these volumes is always clear and often ingenious). He was assisted in the work of the research branch by the best men social science has, men like Robert K. Merton and Paul F. Lazarsfeld of Columbia and John Dollard of Yale, and in writing this book he also had the help of some of the most promising of the younger men in the field. Professor Stouffer and his associates, we learn very early, do not believe, as Professor Dodd does, that they can today *measure* and *weigh*—that is, give meaningful numerical weights to—the interacting factors in any given situation, but they believe that some day they will. For example, we may read such a sentence as: "The problem of developing appropriate psychological tools for measuring the extent to which an individual's behavior toward a particular rule has been 'internalized,' remains largely for the future." But there is no breath of doubt that such tools will eventually be developed.

The overpowering obsession with the physical sciences and their great achievement makes its mark on every page, and defines the general aim. "There are several streams of influence which are converging to develop social psychology and sociology into sciences with conceptual schemes from which, it is hoped, empirically verifiable inferences and predictions can eventually be made." This is a modest and sober evaluation of present achievement. The extravagant and silly claims for the social sciences are not made by men like Stouffer, Merton, Lazarsfeld, and Dollard: they come from enthusiastic journalists like Stuart Chase, and the methodologically naive anthropologists and "social psychiatrists." The type of work that is represented in *The American Soldier*—that in which a highly technical, carefully tested type of public opinion research is used within the framework of ideas created by social thinkers like Pareto and Durkheim so as to test them and build a science—is practiced by sophisticated and learned

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men who know their accomplishments do not warrant brash enthusiasm. Nevertheless, however much they admit their present limitations, their aim is clearly stated: *to create sciences;* and even the present volumes, we may read, make some ("severely limited") "contributions to the verification of hypotheses of some generality."

The last two quotations leave no doubt that they have taken as their model *physical* science, the most advanced and successful of all. Physical science does indeed create sets of universal propositions (conceptual models), and from them deduces almost everything in the world with which it deals. Given the law of gravitation, plus some historical conditions, practically nothing is left unexplained in the movement of the planets. Other sciences are not as strikingly successful in ordering their worlds. If the writers of *The American Soldier,* and the branch of social science they represent, had taken, let us say, biology as a model, their presumption would have been less and their success in approximating it possibly greater.

THE claim must guide the critic. This book, we are clearly told, is not history, though it will be useful to historians; it is not the casual or organized impressions of scholars, however gifted or intelligent; it is science.

But what is science? Science, we have recently been reminded in a brilliant article by Eliseo Vivas ("Two Notes on the New Naturalism," *Sewanee Review,* July 1948) is not intelligence and not wisdom, and it is not even reason. Aristotle and Spinoza, Francis Bacon and Giordano Bruno, John Dewey and Rudolf Carnap—whatever may be their varied relations to science and reason, none of them is a scientist. Rational thinking and writing, the awareness of one's own biases, the consideration of all aspects of a question, and the use of mathematical symbols—all these were present in men before the rise of modern science, and some perfectly sound examples of scientific investigation, such as the premature one reported at the head of this article, involve hardly any of these modes of thought.

In its most ideal form—and this is the form the writers of *The American Soldier* have chosen to emulate—science is a technical enterprise which involves, among other things, the observation of phenomena, often indirectly through technical devices, the discovery of uniformities—of patterns—in these phenomena, the formulation of hypotheses about these uniformities, and the determination, by experiment, prediction, and further observations, which of two or more hypotheses best describes the phenomena and is worthy of being called a law. Science is also an enterprise which, in contradistinction to all other efforts of the human mind, is, as Professor Stouffer himself points out, *cumulative.* Every novelist, for example, must begin from scratch: because someone else has described a love affair does not mean that no more love affairs need be described. The work of earlier philosophers is like the advice of a parent: perhaps sound and even usable; but life must still be lived again. John Dewey, like Plato, must again take up the old questions of what is just, good, and worthwhile, and how do we know what we know, and so on. But scientists do not begin from scratch: they build on each other's work, and do not have to go over the ground others have secured unless they have some special reason to think there was an error. Each scientific achievement forms part of a chain closely joined, one link immediately dependent on the other, in a way that the achievements of art and philosophy do not.

The American Soldier forms no part of a cumulative record of science in this sense. It rests on no hypotheses or laws established by previous social science, nor does it pass on any. No one will ever in the future begin a scientific article with the words, "As Stouffer et al. have *established.* . . ." They will have to use instead words like *"suggested"* or *"illustrated."*

Now it is true that this work *does* form part of a cumulative development in respect to *techniques.* It uses those developed by other social scientists, and its own new techniques will be used by future social scientists: there is, indeed, no question but that these techniques are scientific, that is, systematic and empirical. But as to the scientific conclusions established in a general form by their use, the authors are necessarily silent.

The Pirate outfielder Ralph Kiner is called in one press report "scientific": he keeps a card file in which he indexes the characteristics of every pitcher he faces. The technique seems an excellent one, breathing the spirit of modern scientific enterprise, and aspiring batters in the future will perhaps use it. But no one believes that the art of hitting home runs can thereby be transformed into a science. In the same way, *The American Soldier* uses and creates techniques for the study of human behavior. Unquestionably, we have scientific method in *The*

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American Soldier, as we may have it in baseball. The question however remains, do we have an approach to the organized body of conclusions that form a science?

TO DEMONSTRATE—as I believe—that social science has not succeeded in establishing the kind of uniformities or laws concerning society and human behavior that might be first material for the building up of a science; that all that is cumulative in social science is its techniques; and that, for various reasons having to do with its subject-matter, and not with its techniques, no true social science can be established—to demonstrate these assertions, would require a close analysis of *The American Soldier* and other works that social scientists claim are stepping stones toward the building of a science. It would involve, if we were to begin the task with the first two volumes of *The American Soldier*, deciding what, in scientific terms, is the status of each of the statements in its 1250 pages of text—where we deal with demonstrated fact, where with uniformity, hypothesis, law, prediction, and what-not.

This is properly a job for the philosophers of science: those gray eminences who, themselves usually not concerned with the work of science, devote themselves to the study of its method and its essence.* But the philosophers of science, many of whom hold to the position that there can be a social science, have done very little to show—in detail, and using the materials of the social sciences—what its structure might be, nor have they subjected social science, in its monographic, workaday form, to the close and detailed analysis it needs.

Failing their intervention, the less qualified must do what they can. I would like to take from *The American Soldier* three examples of what would be generally considered scientific work as good as any the social sciences have to offer and see just what the scientific status of each is. The first is a set of a questionnaires forming what is called an "index"—the chief technical tool that has been developed for *observation* in the social sciences; the second is a "concept," which in this case corresponds most closely to the ordinary scientific notion of a *hypothesis;* and the third a *prediction*.

OBSERVATION: *The American Soldier's* data, as we have said, are taken almost entirely from questionnaires. The questionnaire is a relatively recent development. Formerly, only those social scientists who studied opinions and attitudes resorted to questionnaires. Now, every problem, no matter how remote from matters of opinion on its surface, is considered approachable by questionnaire methods; and one can be sure that if someone set out today to study *anomie* (a word used by the French sociologist Émile Durkheim to refer to the feeling of "normlessness," rootlessness, and loneliness that he felt was endemic in industrialized and urbanized societies), he would not, like Durkheim, use suicide statistics, but set to work creating his own data with questionnaires.

Without the questionnaires, it would hardly be possible to make such extensive use of The Machines, and it is perhaps not unfair to suggest that this is one of the reasons we have had the increasing emphasis on questionnaires in recent years. The questionnaires supply far more fodder for The Machines than the relatively sparse and unmalleable data of the census, or any other source of "real" figures, i.e., figures which are independent of the particular way in which we try to estimate them or of the specific agents who compute them.

The machines in question—and we must understand them before we can understand *The American Soldier*—are IBM or Hollerith machines, which take punched cards, each with about seventy columns, in each of which there are about a dozen positions that can be punched. The punches, the full record of the questionnaire, indicate one of two things: either something about the respondent's social position—his sex, race, age, marital status, schooling, and so on, the sort of "real" figures the census collects; or an answer given to a question about *attitudes*. Most of the card is taken up with punches representing these latter items, the special creation of the social scientist. There will be one or more cards for each

*Strangely enough, not only do those who today know most about scientific method and science as a system of logically connected assertions—the philosophers of science—have little to do with science, but the physical scientists, whose scientific accomplishments have been most amazing, and which form the subject matter for speculation and analysis by the philosophers of science, concern themselves very little with the general understanding of science. The unfortunate social scientist is in the middle; he knows more about scientific method and "methodology" than the practicing physical scientist, but tries to make up with this formal knowledge for the poverty of his concrete scientific accomplishments.

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respondent, depending on how many questions were asked (it is not hard to record a hundred items on a single card). The original questionnaire is transferred by the operator of a punch machine to the cards, according to a system devised for this questionnaire by the social scientist, who tries to arrange the punches so as to permit the maximum amount of manipulation of the data in search of significant correlations. The whole process of thinking up questions, "testing" them (that is, asking them of a few people to see if they are understood), training interviewers and administrators, drawing up a code and training coders (the code is the system by which the questionnaires are translated into punching arrangements)—this whole process reaches its apotheosis when the cards are "run"—that is, fed into the machine, with whatever punch one wishes counted at some superhuman speed by electrical impulses.

Without such a technical process, *The American Soldier* would not have been possible. With it, we can discover in no time at all—to take a hypothetical example—how many men prefer oatmeal to farina, how many of these have been in the Army one, two, or three years, how many of each of these categories are married, and of these how many have completed college; and thus we may know how many unmarried college men who have been in the Army one year prefer farina. In short, questions that would otherwise never have come to trouble the human mind can now be asked and answered by the machines. Any reader of *The American Soldier,* seeing the same information recur again and again, broken down in a variety of different ways, will soon come to feel that the possibilities and limitations of the machine dictate a large part of the contents of such a volume.

THE utilization of the reckoning devices of modern technology requires the production of numbers; and questionnaires, along with the way in which they are analyzed, can supply us with a vast number of numbers. The question, however, now arises whether they are important numbers, whether they are numbers which tell us about the real world of social behavior, and permit us safely to go on to higher steps of the scientific process.

Now it becomes quickly apparent they do *not* immediately reflect the objects of our concern, since in most cases we are interested in the study of *behavior,* and questionnaires only give us the *expression of attitudes,* which may be related to behavior in a variety of ways: as conscious lie, unconscious rationalization, rational but inaccurate prediction, and so on. But the fundamental assumption of the use of questionnaires in a volume such as *The American Soldier* is that there will be a regular connection between the sets of numbers in which we sum up questionnaires, and some social behavior—that is, that by means of the questionnaire, we will measure a reality of social behavior. For this reason, sets of questions are sometimes called "scales" (if they fulfil certain technical qualifications) and can also be called "indexes." (Anything which is believed to vary regularly with something else may be considered an "index" to it; e.g., we may consider suicide an index to *anomie.*) The critical question now becomes: do questionnaires give us good indexes? Do they really reflect the social reality they are used to study?

Let us see. A good part of the first volume of *The American Soldier* is devoted to the presentation of the data accumulated by the use of an index—that is, a set of questionnaires—that was established to study morale. Morale, we are told at the outset, is a group phenomenon; questionnaires, of course, report only on individuals, so there seemed no simple way of studying the morale of a group by way of questionnaires. "The problem of measuring the cooperative effort of a unit [that is, morale] was never solved satisfactorily. . . . Faced with the necessity of giving the Army command, quickly and reliably, information which would be useful in policy making, the Research Branch concentrated primarily not on the evaluation of the cooperative zeal of groups toward Army goals, but rather on study of personal adjustment." For, it was reasoned: "If most of the soldiers in one outfit show evidence of adjustment . . . and if most of the soldiers in another outfit show little evidence of adjustment, it is not unlikely that the former outfit would be found to have, if it could be measured, higher morale than the latter."

In this way, individual "personal adjustment" was substituted for group morale. But personal adjustment, too, cannot be directly observed: " . . . it is [therefore] assumed that, on the average, men who said they were in good spirits, that they were more useful in the Army than as civilians, that they were satisfied with their Army jobs and status, and that in general they liked the Army, were better ad-

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justed to the Army than men who were negative."

So, faced with the difficult problem of finding out what makes for high morale and what for low morale—ultimately, to find out what makes armies win or lose, as the problem is put in the very first page of this book in a quotation from *War and Peace* — we see that the social scientist carefully picks his way back along a chain of shaky reasoning until he comes to the point where he can ask a few questions, and record what soldiers say. This permits him to draw up charts and reports for the guidance of policy-makers showing how personal adjustment varies with education, with age, and so on. Meanwhile, what has happened to morale?

"Mit gier'ger Hand nach Schätzen gräbt,
Und froh ist, wenn er Regenwürmer findet!"
("With greedy hand he digs for treasures,
And is happy when he finds earthworms!")

—this was Faust's conclusion on man's efforts to achieve knowledge. The social scientists, free from any such scepticism, offer their earthworms with delight.

How can the social scientist "prove" to the policy-maker that his questionnaires really get at "personal adjustment"? Well, it appears that those men who come out highest on his questionnaires also are more likely than not to be NCO's and officers, and those who come out lowest are more likely than not to be AWOL's and psychoneurotics.* The point of this demonstration seems to be that while we cannot show *directly* that our questions measure personal adjustment, everyone agrees that officers and NCO's are better adjusted than AWOL's and psychoneurotics, and the questions do select *them*—that is, good answers correlate positively with one's position in the Army hierarchy, negatively with the degree of psychoneurosis and AWOL.

But then the whole point of the index is thrown into question. For it is as much as admitted that a soldier's position in one of the four categories—officers, NCO's, AWOL's, and psychoneurotics—is a more certain measure of his personal adjustment than his score on the set of questions forming the index: for we have used the former to validate the latter. Then why not study the number of psychoneurotics and AWOL's, and the way they are distributed in different theaters, at different times, and by different background characteristics, directly, rather than the scores on a questionnaire index? Why resort at all to the shifting sands of subjective report?*

Perhaps because the contemporary social scientist, instead of studying a social actuality to the limited and tentative extent he can, too often prefers to devote himself to the multiplication of his special measuring rods, all suffering the same congenital inaccuracy. ("At least sixteen indices of intensity of opinion are known," reports Stuart C. Dodd in the article previously referred to, "and more seem inventable.") Professor Stouffer does indeed consider the possibility of what is called an "objective index" for morale, that is, something which measures what people do, not what they say. "The chief difficulty with such indexes . . .," we are told, "turned out to stem from the fact that so few men in a given unit would be involved. If only one or two per cent of the men would be arrested by MP's in a given time interval, offenses are not a very useful index of relative adjustment. . . ." I cannot understand the argument. One can draw the same conclusion by comparing .5 with 1 as by comparing 50 with 100, if the samples are large enough. And if one is using a simple measure, as the number of men arrested, it is easy to work with large samples. And, practically, the point also seems ill-taken. If I were a general, I would be far more interested in the proportions of men who had, say, gone AWOL—even if the figure were very small—than in the proportion who scored above a passing grade in an index of adjustment, based on their oral reports. It might be shown to my complete satisfaction that the latter had a high correlation with the former. But why use a shaky "instrument" when the reality it is supposed to measure is immediately at hand—and can be read off more easily than the instrument?

*More impressive is the demonstration that it is possible to "predict" personal adjustment from the questionnaire index, since privates with positive attitudes are more likely to become NCO's in the future. But I will take up the whole question of this type of prediction later.

*We leave out of account, in this analysis, the enormous problems involved in getting people to give truthful answers, interviewers to use uniform techniques, coders to feel a sense of responsibility —and so on through the chain of bureaucratic organization necessary before the social scientist is presented with a neat pile of cards.

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But perhaps that is just the point. The relatively few objective indexes one can use mean technological unemployment for the machines, while the instrument for measuring personal adjustment involves no less than twenty-three questions, divided into four areas. And we can run the machines far into the night correlating scores on the total index with scores in each area, even on each question, and then correlating these with our background information on age, marital status, rank, and so on. A good part of this book is filled with just such information. And the clicking of these intricate machines so impressively resembles the cold, hard rhythm of *real* science!

HYPOTHESIS: We may speak of hypotheses in history. Louis XIV, one may hypothesize, did not expect that England would go to war if his grandson ascended the Spanish throne. One may then find documents to prove or disprove the hypothesis.

Similar hypotheses can be found scattered through *The American Soldier,* and one can conceive of thousands more that can be verified by data in it: for example, American soldiers of World War II who were married were unhappier about being in the Army than soldiers who were unmarried. And, indeed, for the first time it becomes a relatively simple matter to verify hypotheses in history referring to the attitudes of large numbers of people. This is a real achievement of public opinion research.

But history is not science. The social scientist is after bigger game than this. He wants to infer, from general conceptual schemes, hypotheses of such a nature that eventually all the conditions that might prevent them from holding true are known and no more have to be added to explain future deviations. He wants to be able to say, for example, "persons in subordinate positions tend to obstruct the activities of those superior to them," and eventually discover all the limiting cases, all the conditions tending to operate against this law, so that when one brings up a case where the law did not hold, one of the previously listed limiting conditions will be found present.

There are not too many good hypotheses in *The American Soldier,* and many of these seemed to be operating under pseudonyms. I believe that what the authors speak of as the "concept" of "relative deprivation" is such as hypothesis.

The concept is brought in to explain some of the data collected by the index of personal adjustment just discussed. If we take the questions that refer to "personal esprit" and "personal commitment" alone, we discover that the less educated, the older men, and the married men come out with more negative attitudes than the better educated, the younger men, and the unmarried men. An explanation for this is offered by the concept of relative deprivation, which suggests that one feels better or worse on the basis of whether one has been treated better or worse than other people who are around. The older men compare themselves with the younger, feel it is unfair they should have to give up careers, jobs, etc., and have less personal esprit and commitment. The married men compare themselves with the unmarried, and go through the same line of reasoning.

But the less educated men—how explain this apparent deviation from the hypothesis of relative deprivation? In what way are *they* relatively deprived? Professor Stouffer here suggests that perhaps, on the average, they were not in as good health as the better educated (since education is, in turn, correlated with income!), and, consequently, felt more deprived by being drafted. Then he refers to jobs. It's true they were giving up worse jobs, and shouldn't have felt deprived on that score, but their friends—assumed for this purpose to be the less educated too—were being deferred as skilled workers or farmers, which must have made those less educated who were drafted feel relatively more deprived.

Now, obviously, if the better educated had turned out feeling more deprived than the less educated, we could have found rather easier ways of fitting that under the concept of relative deprivation. Thus a little imagination will permit us to cover any conceivable outcome of the questionnaires. When we read that Air Corps men were more dissatisfied than non-Air Corps men about promotions—even though the tables of organization in the Air Corps called for far more NCO's and officers than anywhere else in the army—the versatile concept of relative deprivation is again called upon, and we are asked to believe that just *because* there were so many opportunities for advancement in the Air Corps, men felt dissatisfied with whatever grade they had achieved.

It would seem that a concept in the social sciences is something unique. It is an explanation, or a hypothesis, which need not be tested, but which it is legitimate to use wherever, by twisting and turning, it may be made applic-

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able. It cannot be refuted by facts, and it will be found to hold true whatever the outcome of a given set of data. If the non-Air Corps men are dissatisfied with their promotions — why clearly, they are deprived relative to the Air Corps men. If they are not—there is recourse to the mental gymnastics we have just described.

It is a simple rule of scientific method that if a hypothesis is such that it can neither be proved nor disproved, if it is held to be correct no matter what the facts, it does not belong to the realm of science—it is a matter for philosophy or faith. The concept of relative deprivation would seem to fall into this category. And every other hypothesis on this level of generality offered in *The American Soldier* would, I believe, be found similarly wanting if subjected to analysis.

PREDICTION: Perhaps that part of *The American Soldier* of which its authors are proudest is an example of prediction—the crown and glory of science. Before D-Day, a large number of companies were given a questionnaire and rated for "willingness for combat," "confidence in combat stamina," and "confidence in combat skill." The average score of each company was then compared with the nonbattle casualty rate of that company for the two months after D-Day. What we have here are two indexes: the questions (eight in all) that are used to rate soldiers for "willingness for combat," etc., form an index to the attitudes which determine how effectively a unit will fight; the rate of nonbattle casualties (which includes cases of exhaustion, psychoneurotic cases, and so on) is then an index to combat effectiveness. One might argue—as I did earlier in the discussion of the index of personal adjustment — against the validity of both indexes, and the second one in particular seems questionable, but for the purposes of the discussion, let us assume both are sound. It is now asserted that performance on the first ("willingness for combat," etc.) permits us to predict performance on the second (nonbattle casualties).

The book uses a number of ways to represent the order of success achieved. Perhaps the most impressive and simplest is when it takes in each regiment the three best and three worst companies, according to the score achieved on the attitude test (in this example, we use only the "willingness for combat" part of the test, which gets the best results), and compares the average nonbattle casualty rates for the two groups. In one regiment, the worst companies had 132 per cent more nonbattle casualties than the best; in another regiment, the worst companies had fewer nonbattle casualties than the best: only 92 per cent as much. On the average, the companies with negative attitudes before D-Day had 62 per cent more nonbattle casualties after D-Day than did the best companies.

In order to evaluate this achievement—by no means insignificant—correctly, let us consider two alternate means of getting at the same results.

We might ask each regimental commander to list the companies in his command in the order of their estimated combat effectiveness. The results might be better, worse, or about the same as the results arrived at by using attitude tests. There is no question, however, that the method is less scientific, in so far as it is less systematic.

We might also have doctors and psychiatrists examine each man, and estimate the health and physical fitness of each unit. The results might be better, worse, or about the same as those achieved by attitude tests. The method, however, is rather more scientific than attitude tests, in so far as our procedures for measuring health are better than our procedures for measuring attitudes.

The point is a simple one. In science, the role of prediction is to test hypotheses and its accuracy is the most compelling proof of the correctness of a hypothesis (as when we predict, from formulas, that this structure will break when so and so much weight is put on it). A prediction is based on a clear conception, stated in hypotheses, of the connection between two sets of things: in this book, a prediction would involve the tracing of a line of connection between the way soldiers feel, the way they report their feelings, and the way they fight. The connection, it would have to be asserted if we were to have a real prediction, is thus and so, and consequently I *predict* combat effectiveness will be thus and so. Now this "prediction" of combat effectiveness, and the two possible alternatives I suggested, test no hypotheses: they are merely elaborate ways of making estimates.

An estimate is based on no rigorous explication of connections, and plays no role in testing either special hypotheses or the structure of a science. Drawing on general experience and whatever specialized knowledge may be available, one may try to forecast a certain outcome;

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one may be even so fortunate as to find a regularity between two sets of data. But as long as there is no clear and explicit line of necessary connection between the two sets of data, we have an estimate, and the structure of science is in no way advanced. Perhaps next time we will not observe the uniformity; and perhaps there will be a higher correlation if we use some completely different means to get one or both sets of statistics.

Prediction, as the term is used in scientific procedure, would have to be based on some theory of the connections between expressed attitudes and nonbattle casualties, and would eventually have to involve some such statement, made *before* the battle, as, "on the basis of these hypotheses, suggested by such and such preliminary work, we predict nonbattle casualties will be thus and so."

In *The American Soldier,* the numbers are allowed to speak for themselves, and the authors, impressed with the evidence of the numbers and hoping the readers will be equally impressed, make no effort to show that their "prediction" forms part of a chain of scientific procedure: whether it tests hypotheses, applies hypotheses, proves or illustrates a logical connection. As a matter of fact, it does none of these things, and we have no way of knowing whether the means I suggest above, or ten others, more or less scientific, might not be better.

THE use of scientific method, of abstract conceptual schemes and fabulously complex calculations, and the adherence to canons of scientific objectivity, all these do not necessarily create a science. Why this should be so—why such heartbreaking effort in the social sciences should have led only to *The American Soldier,* when, I am sure, much less effort in astronomy had already led to such an achievement as the prediction of eclipses—such a question can be answered, according to each man's preference, by listing all the conceivable differences between nature and history, even between "mind" and "matter." But whatever the reason why human affairs are so peculiarly resistant to the type of organization that has been successful in so many other spheres, it *is* so.

This conclusion still leaves us with important questions. For example: even if scientific method when applied to human affairs does not produce a science, is it still not the best way of studying anything? If we take scientific method—as John Dewey and Sidney Hook do—to include all the modes of rational and systematic procedure, of course. It is the best way to proceed in any matter, whether we are studying beliefs in ghosts or the movements of ocean currents. But we cannot argue that because scientific method has achieved certain unique results in some spheres, it will achieve the same results in all spheres. We cannot argue—as certain social scientists do—that because scientific method produces agreement on what is true for nature, it will produce agreement on what is true for man. I do not believe that the problem of extending science over the sphere of human behavior is primarily one of overcoming our human biases and prejudices; that our success in physics is owing to the fact that we are not emotionally involved with masses and energies, as we are with human wills and motivations—though this difference is certainly very important. The fundamental problem seems to me to arise from the nature of the materials which first attract our attention. There are aspects of human behavior—like language and simple learning—that seem to be, by nature of the facts about them that interest us, susceptible to organization into scientific systems. As we get further away from human behavior rooted in physiology, however, the application of scientific method becomes less and less fruitful, and it becomes harder and harder to rise above the immediately given facts through organized scientific procedures.

If our aim in applying scientific method to human affairs is more than the relatively humble one of assisting reason (which, unlike science produces neither near-universal agreement nor relative certainty)—if it is to find "conceptual schemes from which . . . empirically verifiable inferences and predictions can . . . be made"—then, from the evidence of *The American Soldier* and the many years work that have preceded it, we must either fool ourselves into thinking we are social *scientists* when we are not, or remain silent.

IF *The American Soldier* is not, strictly speaking, science, is it at least useful? To the Army, I think hardly at all. We might take every statistic in this book, halve or double it: the Army could have done very little about it, or would have wanted to do very little about it. The generals seem to have been motivated by a kind of pure curiosity in supporting the Research Branch studies (though, as General Osborn says, "with research, we . . . were able

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to defend our course before Congress and the press"). At one point Professor Stouffer writes: "The general picture in this volume of men preoccupied with minimizing their discomforts, acquiring higher rank or pay, securing safe jobs . . . does not suggest a particularly inspired work performance in the American Army. But Americans fought, and fought brilliantly and tenaciously when they had to. . . ." This seems to come pretty close to saying that all the attitudes "measured" did not matter when it came to fighting, which was the prime function of the Army, and the ultimate purpose for which the studies were undertaken.

However, *The American Soldier,* if not useful to the generals, is useful to the historian and the scholar. In the course of the efforts to create a science, a great deal of interesting and valuable information about the American Army and the American soldier in World War II has been turned up. (I have not reported on it here, since it was not my aim; just as I have not reported on oddities and gaucheries of interpretation, and some incredible examples of moral and social blindness which wise men would not be capable of, but which scientists cannot especially be blamed for—for it is primarily as science that I consider *The American Soldier.*)

But actually this information was produced only as a by-product of the scientific undertaking. If a group of scholars of the same capacities as those who produced *The American Soldier* had set to work writing an account of the American soldier in World War II, without the illusion they were creating a science, and using whatever means came to hand—including, of course, all the statistical procedures that have been developed since the rise of capitalism—we would have had far more information on the subject. Indeed, one might say that rarely was so little useful information about so large a question spread over so many pages. All because the aim was science, not understanding; the mechanical and formal confining of knowledge, not the increase of it.

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LETTERS FROM READERS

The Religious Question in Israel

To the Editor of Commentary:

Milton Konvitz's article "A Plea for Religious Freedom in Israel," in the September Commentary, holds much interest for those of us who are following with some concern the trend of affairs in Israel. However, I feel that most of Dr. Konvitz's specific anxieties are puerile; that he is witch-hunting, and like all witch-hunters is unable to maintain an objective and balanced attitude. . . .

It is obvious that the chief disabilities under Israeli law which Dr. Konvitz fears will apply only to the Jewish citizens of the state, as he realizes, since the proposed Constitution guarantees freedom of worship and belief, and complete civil rights to all citizens regardless of race, creed, or sex. On this basis he objects to the legal observance of Saturday (or indeed of any day—"no law enacted by an assembly can designate any one day as the Queen of days") as the Sabbath, with its restrictions upon the freedom of the individual. Dr. Konvitz speaks very glibly of a *"freie medina,"* and sets up the United States as its example, but is he not aware that Sunday is the legal Sabbath established by law in the United States; and that there are existent today in countless municipalities "blue" laws which insist upon a strict observance of the Sabbath and make infringements of it punishable offences? New England Sunday laws are notorious; while the Methodist community of Ocean Grove, N.J., to this day (see the New York *Herald Tribune,* September 5, 1949, page 13) permits no one to bathe or even wade at the beach, to drive an automobile, or to attend or give parties on that day. In Brooklyn until quite recently many Jewish storekeepers in Williamsburg and other dominantly Jewish sections who kept their shops closed on Saturday and open on Sunday were summoned to court by the police. In virtually all communities of the United States, taverns and bars are kept closed on Sunday by municipal law. All federal and municipal agencies also are closed on Sunday. We cannot receive mail on that day, and can send it only from the corner pillar box (which has a restricted schedule on Sunday). These are disabilities to which we are thoroughly accustomed, and curtailments of civil liberties under which we do not chafe. Why then should we object to a legal observance of the Sabbath in the Jewish state? Indeed since it is right and fitting that one day in the week should be a legal day of rest, it would be the grossest offence to good taste for the Israeli government to make it any other day than Saturday. Moreover, the proposed Constitution specifically states that although Saturday is the legal Sabbath, Arabs and Christians may legally observe their own Sabbaths and holy days.

Again, Dr. Konvitz raises the point of the law of *kashruth.* The Israeli government has stated that it could not—and would not—police the individual home. Its refusal to permit the use of public funds for the purchase or import of non-kosher foods, and its refusal to serve them in government-maintained institutions, can in no way be construed as a restriction of the right of individual Jews to eat non-kosher food if they desire. In this connection I should like to mention that Dr. Konvitz's pride in the fact that he maintains the laws of *kashruth,* not because they are *laws* (as they are, indeed, in the Orthodox faith) but because he so chooses, is juvenile. Since the prohibition of the Jewish law against the use of non-kosher foods is only religious and not based on the premises that non-kosher food is unwholesome, non-nutritious, or flavorless, then a "free" decision to adhere to these rules other than on religious grounds is founded on sentiment, habit, whimsy, or caprice, and has no especial spiritual value. "The ideal Jew," declared R. Elazar ben Azariah (*Sifra* to Lev. 20:26), "does not say 'I have no desire to eat swine's flesh, no desire to indulge my sensual cravings. I desire it but I will conquer the desire for the sake of my Father in Heaven.'" The *command* to abstain from the forbidden flesh, the *law* which must be obeyed: this is what Dr. Konvitz refuses to allow for Judaism. We must choose to do it ourselves—or not do it at all. "The bread of compulsion is the bread of affliction," he declares with rhetorical emphasis.

The Jew must not be coerced by the law, he continues, because if he is given no freedom to sin he has no freedom to do good. This argument confounds "libertarianism" with "libertinism." It is against the law in the United

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States as in every other country, whether a *"freie medina"* or not, to steal or kill. Does this inhibit our freedom of choice not to steal or kill? Every other religion admits a code of law which must be obeyed; why are Jews so afraid or ashamed to acknowledge such authority in Judaism? I should like to see our own code not abandoned but reframed to suit our times and the age we live in so that we can live as Jews in a modern world. We need to build, not destroy, and the solution does not lie in Dr. Konvitz's "libertarianism." It is as inadmissable for a free and rational religion to permit the fool to think for himself as it is to allow the bigot to think for others. I await with interest the further articles on the subject you have promised us.

ROSE ROSENSOHN JACOBS
East Orange, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Please let me tell your readers that Milton R. Konvitz's charge against me (in your September issue)—that I advocate something "most uncongenial to the spirit of American democracy"—is nonsense and worse.

The very opposite is the truth.

In my article "Towards a Noble Community" (in the *Menorah Journal* for Autumn 1948), I was far from urging the establishment of an ecclesiastical or clerical domination. That would be rightly repellent to all liberal-minded Jews. I urged the restoration and implementing, in American democratic terms, of our historic institution of the Synagogue (yes, with a capital "S"). For the spirit and suggested working-out of my proposal, if one is interested to get it fairly, one should turn to the article itself, not to any perverse misrendering like Dr. Konvitz's.

I need only point out here that my plan is precisely designed to include the Einsteins and Kallens within the broad arms of an expanded, revitalized Synagogue (the essential expression of Jewish community outside Israel), no less than to include all Jews who want synagogues (with a small "s") to serve their own particular religious and social needs.

I say in my article explicitly: " . . . if the spiritual and intellectual sources of Judaism in the Prophetic-Zakkaian tradition are too weak to assert authority—then many an American Jew will decline to affiliate with a Jewish community at all. He is under no compulsion to do so. . . . One of the glories of our American freedom is that Jewish association here is purely voluntary." Nor does that free choice preclude in any way one's personal loyalty to Judaism.

But those of us who are concerned for a decent *communal* organization of Judaism in America—who are dissatisfied with the present chaos, for instance, in the Jewish communal budget, with duplicating and wasteful "activities" in various areas of our communal life—must not shrink from the necessary reformation of Jewish organizational life in America, not in tribal or nationalist terms, but in those terms and forms that are consonant with our American democracy as a whole.

To talk then of my wanting to establish a church domination, or of being "afraid of diversities," as Dr. Konvitz charges, is, I repeat, nonsense and worse—a misrepresentation.

HENRY HURWITZ
Editor

The Menorah Journal
New York City

Dr. Konvitz Replies

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I did not speak "glibly" of the United States as a *"freie medina."* I could not have spoken more seriously. Anyone who knows some of the more important facts of life ought to know how free Americans are when we compare our lives with the lives of hundreds of millions of human beings in other parts of the world. If Mrs. Jacobs thinks America is not a *"freie medina,"* let her look at the USSR, the Russian satellite countries, Spain, the Moslem countries, some Latin-American countries, and others.

Instead of seeing the high and thick wall of separation of church and state that exists in the United States, Mrs. Jacobs concentrates attention on the Sunday blue laws, one of the few weak spots in that wall of separation.

While originally Sunday laws were adopted by American states to promote the Christian Sabbath as a day of worship and meditation, today the basis of such laws, according to the courts, is not religious observance, but the police power of a state to prohibit labor on a designated day, and the tendency is to repeal such laws (this has been done in Wisconsin, California, Oregon, Arizona, and Wyoming) or to amend them so that they will require simply one day of rest in seven—the citizen may choose any day he likes for his day of rest (this has been done in California and New Hampshire). Mrs. Jacobs cites Ocean Grove, but she fails to state that Ocean Grove is the privately-owned property of a camp meeting association. The situation at Ocean Grove is about as typical of the United States as a lynching is of American law enforcement.

But we are discussing details. The essential difference between your correspondent and myself is that she believes that Jewish law, that the written and unwritten Torah, should become the civil and criminal law of Israel, while

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I believe that Israel, as a political entity, should enact no laws which enforce any of the ritual, ceremonial, or religious aspects of Judaism—that is, if Israel wants to live up to its claim that it is a free, democratic state. There is no common ground between us; we move from opposite poles and in different directions.

One other matter, only personally important. Mrs. Jacobs abuses me for observing certain rites and ceremonies for wrong or bad reasons. Nowhere in my article do I disclose the reasons or motivation for my conduct. Mrs. Jacobs, presuming a prerogative of deity, searches my heart. She has not seen my heart.

A brief comment on the letter by my old and valued friend Mr. Henry Hurwitz. I am unhappy to see that he did not resist the impulse to use invective and to hurl at me such epithets as "nonsense," "perverse," and "misrepresentation." If I have misunderstood Mr. Hurwitz, why does it not occur to him—a person who has been an editor of other persons' writings for more than a generation—that a measure of blame may fall upon himself for the inadequate expression of his thoughts? What a pity that fury has prevented him from exploiting the occasion further to explicate and clarify his meanings.

MILTON R. KONVITZ

Ithaca, New York

Further Comment

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Milton Konvitz's article is a convincing argument for liberalism and separation of synagogue and state in Israel. But, I believe, the whole discussion operates in a vacuum. In April I spent three weeks nosing around various parts of Israel, talking to Jews in the cities, in the *kibbutzim*, in the villages, and in army camps—and a lot of the conversation was about this religious question.

If the fifteen per cent vote received by the religious bloc in the January election was not sufficient proof, my own investigation was conclusive that the big majority of the Jews in Israel are not religious, and do not want a theocracy. Instead of worrying about a theocracy, I think there is room to worry about the great amount of *irreligion* in the Jewish state. If anything, traditional Judaism is tolerated. Everywhere in Israel—except in the synagogues and in the Mea Shearim—the visitor hears that religion is not needed any more now that the Jewish state has been achieved. There is a feeling that nationalism, patriotism, and the Land even supplant the age-old Jewish faith.

I found it hard to understand and I told many Israelis that I couldn't see how the Jews of Israel could be so irreligious when they are now established in the Holy Land, with proof of the Bible in every locality, and their very existence and independence ascribed even by the most irreligious Jew to a miracle. Those Israelis who give thought to the problem think there will be compromises and great changes, that religious holidays will become great national festivals, that the Sabbath restrictions must and will be eased in response to public demand for transportation and the right to enjoy the day of rest.

These discussions of religion in the Jewish state are of course very fascinating. But they should start with the understanding that most Jews of Israel are *not* religious, and therefore there is no possibility of a theocracy. Then the discussions become more realistic.

ROBERT S. GAMSEY
Editor

Intermountain Jewish News
Denver, Colorado

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Milton R. Konvitz's article in the September issue is great stuff. It should be published in Israel; or at any rate reprints widely circulated there. I don't want even the HaPoel Hamizrachi to force me to be free.

MAURICE B. HEXTER

New York City

On Jewish Fiction

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Since I must be the *corpus vile*, it is hard for me to make the observations on Irving Howe's "The Stranger and the Victim" (August COMMENTARY) that ought, after all, to be made. His approach is revealed at once in his complaint that the Jew in American fiction is rarely an individual. A Jew is always, of course, a Jewish individual; there is no *kind*less individual; there is no abstract human being. What Mr. Howe, whether he knows it or not, is in search of is a Jew who is no Jew. No wonder that he has words of sincere praise only for a "Jewish character" delineated by Ernest Hemingway.

I never expected, after the beginning of his adventures in pseudo-Christianity, to defend Sholem Asch. But when Mr. Howe remarks that Asch and I "are so obsessed with their conception of Jewishness that they cannot create a Jew," I am forced to do so. The trouble with the quite young Jewish intellectual in America seems to be his virginity in respect of Jewish knowledge, tradition, faith, historic feeling, and, above all, that *ahavath Yisrael* which leads to understanding and Jewish creativity. And even

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in his ugly pseudo-apostasy Asch has vestiges of all those qualities that would suffice to set up in "Jewishness" a wilderness of the younger intellectuals who place Hemingway above him as a delineator of Jewish character.

It is Mr. Howe's privilege to dislike my *The Island Within*. It came out in 1928 and I have long been dissatisfied with it because it does not go nearly far enough. But I dare say Mr. Howe has no notion of the fact that in a dozen languages that book helped to sustain and comfort Jews. It was in the luggage of refugees; it was in the DP camps. It helped a whole generation to bear affirmatively its Jewish destiny. A new printing of the Italian version (*Il Popolo senza Terra*) has just come off the press. In view of the date of its publication and in view of what happened in the next decade, it is quite funny to have Mr. Howe say that I confused my "will with destiny." The reproach to be brought against the book is that its view of destiny was not far sterner and more uncompromising. Mr. Howe quite writes as though what "de-nazified" Germans would like us to regard as "a late unpleasantness" had never happened.

But, above all and if only to keep the record straight, it is absurd to write about Jewish fiction and its characters in America without a knowledge of my later and maturer books, specifically, since *The Last Days of Shylock* and *Renegade* are historical novels, *This People, Trumpet of Jubilee,* and *Breathe Upon These*. I invite Mr. Howe to study the delineation of the Jewish group in Ozark City in *Trumpet of Jubilee*. But Mr. Howe's whole emotional approach is clear, so abundantly clear! "When we come to Thomas Wolfe, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Ernest Hemingway, we are dealing with writers of far greater abilities than any yet discussed." Perhaps. At least Hemingway—perhaps. And perhaps *not* when in a generation or two vogue and value will have split. But we know the source of this bland and immediate assumption that everything that is *not* ours is better and that all of ours must be valued inversely to its authenticity.

LUDWIG LEWISOHN

Brandeis University
Waltham, Massachusetts

Academic Fellow-Travelers

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I enjoyed reading Sidney Hook's very interesting article on "Academic Integrity and Academic Freedom" in the October COMMENTARY. His advocacy of full and free discussion, on the basis of objective evidence and valid reasoning, of the views and teachings of fellow-travelers, seems to me eminently desirable. One could wish that he had taken the same attitude with regard to known members of the Communist party. It seems a much more promising procedure than administrative or state action.

One danger that I see in his proposal is that "fellow-travelers" is an ambiguous term, not perhaps in Sidney Hook's own mind, but in the minds of his readers, and that, hence, his paper may lead many to attack almost any left-wing view as being primarily fellow-travelerish. Even in that case, of course, little harm would be done if the discussion were carried on in the objective way that Sidney Hook recommends; but, alas, not all faculty members are able to live up to the ideal of truth-seeking discussion which he has so trenchantly described.

CHARLES A. BAYLIS

University of Maryland
College Park, Maryland

"A Dialogue of Two Histories"

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

After reading Daniel J. Boorstin's article "A Dialogue of Two Histories," in the October COMMENTARY, I must express my gratitude for it, as well as for the many other articles in your magazine that I have enjoyed the past few months. Ralph Gordon's poem following Dr. Boorstin's article is a gem in a perfect setting. For after I read it I was able to say to myself—though for twenty years I have not lived in a Jewish community—"I am still of it."

Thank you for making it possible to receive COMMENTARY in my home. May it flourish indefinitely.

SYLVIA L. REBOUSSIN

Williamsburg, Virginia

Mr. Rosenfeld's Article

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As a subscriber to your magazine, I must write you about the article "Adam and Eve on Delancey Street" by Isaac Rosenfeld that appeared in your October issue.

We Jews have always stressed *derech eretz*—good manners—for private and public living. I think Mr. Rosenfeld and your office struck the nadir of publication by having this foul piece appear in your magazine.

Your magazine always prides itself on its high literary form and expression. Someone must have, literally, muffed the ball this time (and I don't mean matzo or meat ball either). If this policy of polluting our own water continues, you will have to remove my name from your list of readers!

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I think an apology is in place. You have given much material for our detractors. Is Isaiah right after all in chapter 49, verse 17? (Look it up!)

RABBI LEO SHUBOW

Somerville, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I am writing in reference to the article entitled "Adam and Eve on Delancey Street," by Isaac Rosenfeld, which appeared in the October issue of COMMENTARY.

This article so far outrages propriety and decency that I feel, as an Orthodox Jew and as a member of the Executive Committee of the American Jewish Committee, a most vigorous protest is called for. Regardless of your individual opinion on *kashruth*, you must, of necessity, have respect for those who observe it as part of their religion, just as you respect Catholics and Protestants in their observances, even though you may not subscribe to their ceremonies. The present article is an attack on an observance of the Orthodox Jewish religion. It flows from an unscientific and now generally discredited procedure of the early psychoanalysts who linked just about everything to sex. If *kashruth* escaped this linkage in that period, it seems a little late now to make the tie. The article goes beyond anything of its kind in indulging in a degree of vulgarity never seen in magazines of good repute, and most certainly not to be expected in the columns of COMMENTARY. The article bears the strongest possible resemblance to samples of the writings of Streicher which I have seen.

The editor of COMMENTARY undoubtedly accepted the article as something limited in its injurious effects to Orthodoxy. In this he made a serious mistake. Most non-Jews have about the same knowledge of the differences between various types of Judaism as, say, the average Jew has of the differences between the Methodist and Lutheran churches. The non-Jewish readers of COMMENTARY, if in the past sympathetic to things Jewish, will be disgusted by the obscenity of the article, and not at all disposed to have more respect for any branch of Judaism. For the non-sympathetic readers of COMMENTARY the article provides an excellent source of anti-Jewish material on the lowest possible level. You may properly ask of yourself what your attitude and reaction would have been had the article appeared in such a magazine as the *Atlantic Monthly*. The article will be a great source of embarrassment to those of us who have recommended COMMENTARY in the past to our non-Jewish friends.

I feel certain that your committee will repudiate this article as not at all representing the aims of COMMENTARY, and that it will take steps to insure that there will be no repetition of this unfortunate episode.

M. L. ISAACS
Dean

Yeshiva University
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I meant to write you some time ago complimenting COMMENTARY upon its stimulating articles, but it seems that when we have a complaint, we write immediately. I am very much surprised that COMMENTARY with its high standards should have included in the October issue the article "Adam and Eve on Delancey Street." Even in jest, such articles have no place in any Jewish periodical, and I hope that the editors will be careful to exclude such material in the future. On the whole, I like COMMENTARY very much and I missed it while I was away on my sabbatical leave of absence.

RABBI MORRIS SILVERMAN

Hartford, Connecticut

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Isaac Rosenfeld's article "Adam and Eve on Delancey Street" was most disgusting. It was an insult not only to observant Jews but to all proud and decent Jews. Rosenfeld's observations were not only cheap and in poor taste but filthy and pornographic as well. . . .

RABBI GILBERT KLAPERMAN

Charleston, S. C.

[We are sorry that a number of our readers found Mr. Rosenfeld's article offensive to good taste and Jewish feeling. Those who know COMMENTARY hardly need assurance as to our editorial policy or intention. As for the author, those who know Mr. Rosenfeld or his work—his novel *Passage from Home* and his writing in COMMENTARY and elsewhere—must acknowledge his genuine concern with Jewish ideas and problems, and his equally genuine Jewish identification.

There are always limits beyond which editors cannot go in editing writers, especially those of Mr. Rosenfeld's seriousness and conviction; we try in COMMENTARY to give the widest possible latitude to the expression of authors' opinions, whether or not we agree with them. At the same time, we recognize that there are several passages in Mr. Rosenfeld's article that lend themselves to misconstruction and misunderstanding and that should have been recast; and certainly there is one anecdote that was in very bad taste and that should have been eliminated. That this was not done represents a lapse in editorial watchfulness, which the Editor deeply regrets.—ED.]

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

The End of Jewish History?

PROMISE AND FULFILMENT. By ARTHUR KOESTLER. Macmillan. 335 pp. $4.00.

Reviewed by GEORGE LICHTHEIM

PROMISE AND FULFILMENT, Arthur Koestler's story of Israel's rise to nationhood, is a difficult book to review, largely because it must have been an easy book to write. The material was at hand, both in the form of impressions gathered on the spot during last year's fighting, and in the no less alluring shape of a profuse literature from which a wealth of factual and anecdotal illustration could be extracted with comparative ease to sustain the author's thesis. If the result is unsatisfactory the explanation lies at least in part with the extreme lack of organization resulting from Koestler's impressionistic treatment of a subject which needs to be approached with the greatest care and tact.

THE book, in fact, suffers from attempting too much. In 335 pages even a better historian or a sounder scholar could not have dealt satisfactorily with a range of topics indicated by chapter subheadings such as "Jewry as a Freak of History"; "Attractions and Repulsions in the Psychological Triangle"; "The Marxist View of Palestine History"; "Social Structure of Arab Society"; "Relativity of Ethical Judgment"; "The Little Death-Ships and the Rise of Terrorism"; and "Mr. Bevin's 18th Brumaire." Koestler, neither a historian nor a scholar, fails on all counts save that of descriptive writing, and in addition spoils a good case by over-emphasis—a weakness attributed by him, with good cause, to other Zionist propagandists. Lack of care in preparing the manuscript, moreover, exposes him to factual errors, among which the attribution of the titles "Caliph" and "Prince" to Arab personalities innocent of such distinction is only the most blatant. No wonder that British reviewers, who have had the book under consideration since early September, have almost without exception refused to take it seriously, a reaction shared by the critics of Mr. Bevin's Palestine policy.

As an indictment of Britain's record in Palestine since 1917, *Promise and Fulfilment,* despite the occasional violence of its tone, is the dampest of damp squibs, if only because it undertakes to defend Zionism purely in terms of *Realpolitik,* extols the terrorists at the expense of the Left, and virtually adopts the ground occupied by the "integral" nationalism of the Maurras school: "right" and "wrong" have no place in judging a nation's struggle for survival. On these terms, a consistent appraisal of the three-cornered struggle for Palestine is impossible.

IF THE book nonetheless has a certain topical importance, it is owing to its author's capacity for dramatizing his personal conflicts. "One who has been a supporter of the Zionist Movement for a quarter century, while his cultural allegiance belonged to Western Europe," Koestler, in a valedictory passage addressed to the Jewish world at large, urges his fellow-Jews to make the choice between settling in Israel or finally deciding "to go their own way, with the nation whose life and culture they share, without reservations or split loyalties." This exhortation concludes a lengthy and curiously envenomed study of the new Jewish state, viewed at close quarters, with all its crudities and eccentricities suitably high-lighted and most of its positive features rather dimly perceived. It is the special mark of Koestler's ambivalent relationship towards Zionism that, notwithstanding his marked dislike of the Israeli reality, he shares the conviction that Israel in its present form is *the* fulfilment of Jewish history.

This is more than the customary myopia of those who overestimate the importance of events taking place in their own generation. It points to an unresolved conflict on a level which subtends the political: for Koestler, Jewish self-hatred (masked as hatred of "the ghetto") is legitimized by Zionism. The establishment of Israel terminates Jewish history, both because the *sabras* are "un-Jewish" ("Within a generation or two Israel will have become an entirely

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'un-Jewish' country"), and because, from now on, assimilation is no longer flight but the only honorable alternative to settling in Israel and becoming a "provincial chauvinist." Israel will probably become "Levantine," and in any case will not amount to very much, but its existence will continue to render legitimate the decision of Western Jews to slough off the bonds of tradition. Thus Zionism is approved because it implies the long-delayed end of Judaism. The Jews, having become "like other nations," will cease to present an object of persecution.

Koestler makes it quite clear in which direction he intends to seek the solution of his own problem.

THERE is, however, a hint of an opportunity missed by Zionism in rejecting the leadership of "a remarkable and much misunderstood figure in Jewish history, Vladimir Jabotinsky . . . a National Liberal in the great nineteenth century tradition, a revolutionary of the 1848 brand, successor to Garibaldi and Mazzini." Jabotinsky, if fate had willed it, might have directed the movement along sound lines, away from "the ghetto" which official Zionism has reconstituted under a somewhat different form. Unfortunately, "the Jews were not ripe for their Garibaldian revolution":

"Dr. Weizmann's background is that of the Eastern Jewish masses. He was born in the small provincial town of Motl near Pinsk, was brought up on traditionalist lines, and speaks the language to which the Jews of Pinsk are prepared to listen. Jabotinsky came from the intellectual center of Odessa, was brought up in a cosmopolitan environment, hated everything connected with Pinsk, and spoke all his eight languages with the accent of an Italian opera baritone, which is anathema to Jewish ears. He fought for the latinization of the Hebrew alphabet, for the Westernization of Israel, which was to become the seventh Dominion of the British Commonwealth, for a change in the spirit of Jewish education from the Talmudic seminary to the British public school. In short, while the psychology of official Zionism represented a continuation of Eastern Jewish tradition, Jabotinsky and his Revisionists represented a complete break with it."

Jabotinsky, the Westernizer, was defeated—although he is also said to have been posthumously vindicated: "In the light of present events, with the Jewish state an established reality, almost every point of Jabotinsky's program has either been implemented by official Zionism, or vindicated by the trend of events—except his stubborn fight against the Partition scheme." Immediate victory, however, went to his opponents who had the masses behind them. "The gap in Jewish social history . . . the telescoping of centuries of social evolution into a few decades, left no room for a true national-liberal party: it was crushed between ghetto and Utopia." (The latter is Koestler's all-embracing term for the socialist movement in Israel which, it is fair to recall, did most of the pioneer work, as well as most of the fighting when war came.)

The result has been to deliver Israel to the mercies of a coalition between dull trade unionists and scheming clericals. There are few redeeming features. The towns are petty-bourgeois, their architecture is suburban, their culture is provincial, and the young generation lacks the finer social graces. Nothing less like the Florence of the Renaissance could well be imagined. At this point, the reader, however reluctantly, is driven to wonder exactly why Zionism should be viewed through, of all things, the idiosyncratic prism of Koestler's personality. To point out at length that Israel is in every respect quite unlike a British public school is not after all a very rewarding occupation.

IT IS also by no means clear why Koestler expects the Jews in general, and not merely a few intellectuals, to find the road to complete assimilation eased by the establishment of a Jewish state. Talk of "choice" sounds unconvincing when addressed to masses of people for whom no real choice with regard to assimilation exists. Koestler has simplified the problem to a degree that is to be explained only by a set concern with purely private and individual problems.

His book, despite its parade of historical and sociological jargon, is a confession of faith (or faithlessness) rather than an analytical treatise. As such it has its merits, particularly the merit of showing the length to which conflicting ideas can be pushed, for there is hardly an opinion—liberalism, socialism, integral nationalism, Zionism, anti-Semitism, hatred of British policy, admiration for British institutions, contempt for the Arabs, appreciation of Arab culture—that is not taken up, pursued, controverted, stood on its head, and reduced to absurdity in this fascinatingly egocentric and often unbearably pretentious essay-cum-pamphlet-cum-pseudo-historical treatise. Koestler has strong opinions on a large variety of subjects and he rings the changes on

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them with his accustomed virtuosity. In short, *Promise and Fulfilment* is worth reading but it tells one more about the author than about his subject.

The Ordeal of Criticism

IMAGE AND IDEA. By PHILIP RAHV. New Directions. 164 pp. $3.00.

Reviewed by LESLIE A. FIEDLER

IN THE texture of these essays, there is the manifest intent of reaching a relatively large, amateur audience. Rahv's is an open tone and a vocabulary not deliberately hermetic, both of which set these pieces outside the orbit of the so-called "New" or textual-explicatory criticism, with its highly developed jargon proper to limited intra-academic discourse. On the other hand, there is a certain truculence of statement, a refusal to come to terms with bourgeois or genteel expectations and especially the central American fable of optimism and success succeeding everywhere, that cuts them off from the largest possible area of acceptance, that area in which flourish the *Saturday Review of Literature* and such exponents of official Americanism in art as Howard Mumford Jones.

"Alienation" is always Rahv's key word—a word that expresses at once the possibility of a rich interplay between artist and society and its failure in fact. In his insistence upon asserting in a public voice the difficulty of performing the business of the artist in America (with the further implication that a society is critically tested by its ability to provide the writer with the possibilities of freedom and acceptance that his development requires), Rahv associates himself with the tradition of criticism that includes H. L. Mencken and the early Van Wyck Brooks, and that has found perhaps its finest expression in some of the essays of Edmund Wilson.

The followers of that tradition have sometimes been called the "Ordealists," and it is a name that suggests some of their passionate intensity, though it directs attention too exclusively perhaps to their analysis of the artist's plight, at the expense of the larger criticism of society implied in that analysis, the moral prophetic tone toward which in one way or another they aspire. (The freezing of that moral drive into literary pharisaism in the later Brooks makes a splendid American "case.")

Yet in Rahv, who comes relatively late upon the scene, there is lacking the vigor, the self-assurance verging sometimes on bumptiousness, of the early practitioners of this kind of criticism. He cries out still against the academy, still ultimately distrusts the pious and the priests, still resolutely sallies forth to rescue the more classic American writers from the ikons that respectability makes of them when it can no longer ignore them, still crusades for the ignored contemporary writer; but something has changed.

There is in Rahv a greater subtlety and resiliency, a wider area of critical tolerance—but those qualities have been achieved by sacrificing the liveliness, the vigor, and brute impact found in the early Ordealists and nowhere else in American criticism. It is in part the kind of artist with whom the critic has come to deal that makes the difference; the proper idols of the Ordealists are what Rahv himself would call the "Redskins," *plein-air* types, resolutely barbarous: Whitman and Twain and Dreiser and Farrell. But what is the latter-day Ordealist doing as a leading advocate of Kafka or Henry James (at whom even Wilson sneers as he retreats, and who was to Brooks the essential despised Paleface), or as a reviver of Nathaniel Hawthorne? There is involved here something like what *Partisan Review* enjoys calling "a failure of nerve," as well as a gain of insight and a broadening of sensibility.

TO UNDERSTAND Rahv's considerable role in recent American literary life, one must see him in a context larger than that of this rather slim volume; first of all, against the background of *Partisan Review*, in which he has long been a controlling force, and beyond that of the parallel, or apparently parallel, interests in radical politics and avant-garde literature out of which that magazine first emerged. One must read back into these essays, selected and revised to represent what Rahv's critical position has now become, the remembered course of his development from a somewhat doctrinaire, though no longer Stalinist, Marxist critic, convinced that there could be no ultimate contradiction between his literary and political allegiances.

He has from the beginning been overshadowed by the figure of Edmund Wilson, a more productive and ingenious critic, with a subtler and more ingratiating style and a con-

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siderably wider group of readers. Rahv, however, represents in more extreme form the critical approach found in Wilson, not mitigated by contact with the university curriculum or the pervasive "gentlemanliness" of the latter.

By the 30's, Marxism had become at last effective in American intellectual life, overcoming the strong native resistance to a deterministic specification of the role of the intellectual; and it seemed on the verge of organizing coherently all the vaguer anti-bourgeois, anti-genteel notions that had until then existed without a program in the livelier critical minds. The "Revolutionary Movement" seemed for a while capable of providing a true focus for the first wave of "Freudian" protest against conventional sex mores, for Menckenian middle-class baiting, for the espousal of anti-philistine literature, as well as for the political revolutionary impulse proper.

In *Partisan Review,* Philip Rahv and his early associates provided a journal to give visible form to that focus, to express the uneasy but powerful complex without disregarding or falsifying any of its contributory elements. The Ordealist approach, refined by the Marxist dialectic, provided the critical method suitable for such a journal, and in its insistence on the rich interpenetration of the exigencies of formal statement and social pressures in the personality of the creative artist, managed to resist for a long time the impulse toward anti-literary "Marxism" and anti-political aestheticism. Rahv's understanding that literary standards could be maintained only outside the totalitarian circle of Stalinism, enabled him to escape the fatal descent which has led others who began with a similar position to the admiration of—Howard Fast!

But the collapse of radical politics on the one hand, and the deflation of the literary reputations of the "radical" writers of the 30's, Dos Passos, Farrell, Caldwell etc. on the other, has finally destroyed the original ideological basis upon which *Partisan Review* and Rahv once stood. On the philosophical side, Rahv has attempted to salvage a kind of minimal Marxism committed to no real politics, supplemented by a heavier and heavier reliance on the insights of Freud, and most recently revised in the light of Existentialist philosophy. The process has meant a re-definition of the key term "alienation," from a product of social forces, to a resultant of buried disturbances in

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the individual psyche, to a basic determinant of the human condition. In each case, there has been the prospect of less and less hope, and finally there is that acceptance of anguish as ultimate that has so much vexed recent genteel critics of *Partisan Review*.

Throughout all his adaptations, however, Rahv has clung desperately to a naturalistic and rationalist position, a faith in "scientific method" as the sole criterion of truth, and the almost mythic vision of a dead, God-less universe that provides a common background for Marx and Freud and Sartre.

Yet despite this philosophic predilection, Rahv has come more and more to comment upon, and *Partisan Review* more and more to print, poets and fictionists committed to various supernaturalist positions. It is a fact of our time that such writers have come more and more to do the work of real distinction, and Rahv has stubbornly refused to betray his own fine taste; but his position is ultimately intolerable. The plight of a critic dedicated to naturalism devoting his expositions and commentary to Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, Kafka and Hawthorne, reflects on its own level the contradictions of *Partisan Review*, printing T. S. Eliot and Robert Lowell and Robert Penn Warren, while conducting symposiums on "The Failure of Nerve."

Despite himself, Rahv sometimes becomes the victim of a desire to resolve that contradiction by denying the reality or ultimate efficacy in the work of art of religious convictions he finds distasteful. It is the obverse of the predicament of the supernaturalist critic before, say, a poet like Rimbaud—and equally dangerous. Such a process vitiates, I think, much of what Rahv has to say about the notion of sin as salvation in Hawthorne, and even somewhat mars the otherwise penetrating and acute study of Tolstoy.

I find Rahv at his best in the general essays such as "Paleface and Redskin" or "The Cult of Experience in American Writing," which afford real scope for his post-Marxian toughmindedness, his willingness to make generalizations in an age of "careful scholarship" and narrow textual exegesis, and his complete lack of squeamishness before despair, rare among those who write about American literature.

I feel, too, that our intellectual life has profited by the strategic elevation of certain culture heroes in which he and *Partisan Review* have played a leading role: the creation of the contemporary pantheon of Dostoevsky, Hawthorne, Melville, James, and Kafka, which we are likely short-sightedly to resent these days as having become merely *chic*, capable of being admired by the culture vulture breathlessly pursuing the up-to-date. Though Rahv's critical system, with its fundamental reliance upon naturalist assumptions, will not permit him to comprehend fully the very writers of whom he has become a leading advocate, he must be given credit for his share in a revolution of taste in fiction, as crucial as the parallel one in verse that has uplifted Donne and the Metaphysicals.

The publication of Rahv's collected essays coincides with the second decade of *Partisan Review*, and with a growing feeling in all quarters that that magazine has somehow lost its *raison d'être*, or at least its initial vigor and interest. *Image and Idea* provides, beyond the intrinsic pleasures and profits of its discourse, a key to understanding that decline historically.

A kind of critical approach is represented here that may seem to us no longer vital; its realest achievements in Rahv, in Edmund Wilson, and in others stir in us rather a comprehension of the recent past than an impulse to future explorations along the same lines. At a point when criticism seems to be going off in a score of directions none of them indubitably forward, it is hard to have to raise such a charge yet once more; and yet it must be said firmly and without irrelevant rancor.

Those of us who were brought up intellectually on *Partisan Review*, look to it sometimes, I am afraid, unreasonably expecting it to do for us in our present ideological plight what we cannot do for ourselves; reflecting on its limitations, we are obliquely commenting on our own. It is well to remind ourselves that no critical approach can outlive the historical moment that evokes it; the thing is to have justified that moment.

From Abraham to Israel

Israel: A History of the Jewish People. By Rufus Learsi. The World Publishing Company. 715 pp. $5.00.

Reviewed by H. A. Fischel

On the jacket of this book we find that it is a "History of the Jewish People" and "the Four-Thousand-Year Epic Story." Unfortunately, in

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decisive parts it is more story and less history.

Learsi's work is one of the few which covers the oldest period, that great formative age in which new religions, new peoples, and new nations were born and which is hidden behind a veil of myth, jumbled-up threads of tradition, taboos on critical insight, and a general lack of data.

Any attempt to write on the early history of the Jewish people usually invites a commendation for courage—but not even this quality is discernible in the book. It outlines the story of the Bible without recognizing that tradition is neither authentic history nor the-best-we-can-do but merely one among many attempts to explain lacunae in our knowledge which were a mystery even to the most ancient writers.

Learsi writes: "The Bible as history has found remarkable support in the testimony of archaeology, and chronicles of the Jewish people may well continue to follow its lead and begin with the three Patriarchs." Contrary to this widely accepted popular homily, archaeology, although confirming the Biblical story in many details (such as custom and law), has infinitely complicated historical problems. It has, for instance, suggested the existence of pre-exodus Hebrew tribes, such as Gad and Asher, in Canaan; and the Bible itself contains traces of others (Calebites, Kenites, Rechabites, etc.) beyond the schematic twelve which Learsi adopts as historical. There is archaeological evidence for a spectacular 15th-century destruction of Jericho which Learsi uncritically ascribes to the Israelites; but Jericho, as the excavations show, was destroyed repeatedly, and it is more likely that the memorable 15th-century destruction became the basis of local legends which were assimilated by later conquerors to the body of their tradition. With regard to Biblical numbers and chronology, we can rely on traditional figures as little as we can follow the map of a medieval geographer, although both are serious and valuable phases of *Geistesgeschichte*. Learsi's acceptance of the Biblical six hundred thousand men (two million people) for the Exodus is an exercise in fantasy.

Learsi admits that the Bible has been "exposed" to various theories (forgetting that tradition is one of them) but claims that "as we read their [the Patriarchs'] lives in the sacred texts the theories fade and vanish: the conviction that they were men, real men, grows on the

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reader and becomes indelible." In the same line of reasoning Achilles and Ulysses are "real men," though no one would begin a Greek history with their exploits. The fact is that with the exception of some passages in Judges which shed light on the tribal constitution of ancient Israel, Biblical books can be used as primary historical sources only from Kings on. Even the David cycle, apart from some interpolated lists and notes, appears in the form of the ancient heroic epic and therefore cannot be accepted as a historical source without critical investigation. Probably the only honest and scholarly way of writing the ancient history of Israel is to list those "various theories" which Learsi airily dismisses and appraise their soundness.

Perhaps most objectionable is Learsi's habit of "harmonizing" the Biblical account and modern scholarship where in fact they contradict each other. One example will suffice: according to Learsi, Abraham's clan originated in Arabia (modern theory), dwelt for a while at Ur (a Biblical theory of its Chaldean origin), and then sojourned at Haran (a Biblical theory of its Aramean origin). Learsi has "harmonized" these theories by molding them into a continuous story! Now this is exactly the fashion in which the Bible joined together conflicting traditions—but it is not a variety of historical method.

THOSE readers who are able to survive the Exodus and cross the desert of antiquity with the author will be rewarded by discovering that the rest of the book compares well with other histories in that it is more complete, including information on the American scene, modern literature (A. D. Gordon is missing), trade-unionism, Jewish organizational life, Zionism, Yiddish, World War II, and Palestine. Indeed, its comprehensive survey of the contemporary scene is *Israel*'s only distinction. The conventional treatment of most subjects; the decidedly wrong description of the economic developments of the 17th and 18th centuries; the overevaluation of self-help and defense in the face of persecution (emotionally understandable); occasional absurd statements such as the remark that the "economic structure of American Jewry" is thrown "out of balance" through preference for the professions; the flowery and often pompous style; and the totally arbitrary list of "Additional Reading" flatly discount the claim of the publishers that we have here "a standard one-volume" history.

Don Quixote of Tunyadevka

THE TRAVELS OF BENJAMIN THE THIRD. By MENDELE MOCHER SEFORIM. Schocken. 124 pp. $1.50.

Reviewed by JACOB SLOAN

"POVERTY and degradation and lack of employment and misery accustom men to pin their hopes on follies not in consonance with the ways of the world." So wrote Mendele Mocher Seforim in one of his novels. As an enlightened 19th-century intellectual and educator of the benighted masses to their civic responsibilities, Mendele fervently believed in the influence of environment. Even the children, he bitterly commented in true Rousseauian fashion, were de-natured by the straitness of existence in the poor Jewish villages within the Pale of Settlement of Czarist Russia. He sharply noted the accusation leveled by ghetto adults at Jewish children when they got out of hand: they were being "childish"! The autodidactic country boy who wandered with a band of gypsy beggars before bowing under "the yoke of livelihood" to become the father of Yiddish literature almost automatically also became an enlightened rationalist who inveighed with his time against the limitations and irrationalities of civilized man. But Mendele was a satirical artist as well as a novelist of social morality, and it is a paradox only in the best artistic sense of the word that he should also have produced one ostensibly minor work totally at variance with the ideology of his day: one which directly attacked the doctrine of perfectibility.

The Travels of Benjamin the Third is that work, and the brevity which permits it to be printed as a 124-page Schocken Library Book is ascribable to this fundamental divergence from the general pattern of Mendele's other works. Digging below the surface of his own assumptions, Mendele came to the hardbed of a psychological reality he could not continue to explore without undermining the purpose of his life. So *The Travels* ends inconclusively; the woebegone travelers are released from military service with a snicker, and continue blithely on their meandering course to the "land of the Red Jews." Yet the book does not end too soon; for the taste of *The Travels* is almost intolerably acerb. One begins reading with a smile which gradually freezes into a grimace. *The Travels* is unrelievedly bitter; but it is a book that must

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be read, to shatter once and for all the romantic idylls now being built upon the ruins of the ghetto.

THE TRAVELS has often and obviously been compared with *Don Quixote:* the chief characters and type of situation seen on the surface are similar. The hero Benjamin, himself, is the same unworldly *shlemiel,* misled by his readings to pursue an archaic ideal in the real world; and Senderel, Benjamin's more practical companion, bears a superficial resemblance to Sancho Panza. Yet here, at the very base of the comparison, an important cleavage appears, and it grows wider the more closely one reads *The Travels.*

For the books which lead Benjamin away from the small town of Tunyadevka ("Droneville") are not the popular romances which Cervantes' contemporaries read and recognized as fictions. They are mythological reminiscences, in which fact and fantasy are inextricable, so that the valid accounts written by the first Benjamin (the actual Benjamin of Tudela) of his travels to the Near East in the 13th century stand side by side with the description of the fabulous River Sambatyon, which acknowledged the piety of the Red Jews by ceasing to hurl stones on the Sabbath. The Hebrew works that induced Benjamin the Third to desert Tunyadevka and set forth on his great travels in search of those mythological Red Jews received some credence in the eyes of the ghetto, to whom Biblical myth was a source of real history. Hence, Benjamin is not a real eccentric in the same sense as Don Quixote; he acts rationally in everyday life (begging, for example, to earn a living) because his dream is popular, and only his flight from home to achieve it is radical. Mendele underscores this point by identifying Benjamin's aspiration with that of the Zionists of his period, whom Mendele viewed with, at best, mixed feelings of irony and sympathy. Benjamin and Senderel remember to take with them the indispensable paraphernalia of the Orthodox Jew, the prayer-bag containing prayer-shawl and phylacteries, as well as prayer books, because their search is, in a larger sense, not for their own, but national redemption.

The second conspicuous distinctiveness of *The Travels* consists in the relationship between Benjamin and Senderel the Housewife. From the very outset, when we are introduced to Senderel peeling potatoes and wearing an apron, it is an unmistakably homosexual relation.

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There are frequent and clear references to Senderel's femininity; he assumes the role played by Jewish women in the ghetto: Senderel is the "female" provider for the learned idealistic male, Benjamin. It is Senderel who is most successful at the ancient profession of begging, and, ironically, he who begins to adapt himself to the routine formality of military life which Benjamin disdains. Like Swift, Mendele's attitude toward women in *The Travels* is sardonic; the only women in this book are ignorant, aggressive, spiteful, and masculine. There are none of the tractable, feminine women whose education to liberalism figures so largely in Mendele's larger works. This absence of sympathetic woman figures and the emphasis on men who have deserted their masculine functions is an important element in the pessimism of this book. What can one expect of a world where sexuality itself has gone awry?

Nor does religion offer its famous consolations. The encounter of the fugitive husbands with the peace-making rabbi on the big-city bridge turns into a complete burlesque in which the rabbi proves his wordy inadequacy and is forced to retreat from the—perhaps symbolically—narrow one-way bridge. Significant, too, is Mendele's employment of children and animals for crude effects—as the scene in which a peasant boy sics a dog on to the rabbi at the river and sends him flying, desperately holding on to his pants. Children and animals are no longer the exploited creatures of nature. They turn the tables on the adults by upsetting their loftiest pretenses; e.g., Benjamin embracing a cow in his sleep, which in return both butts the hero and upsets a bucket of water over him. Most devastating of all, in a passage of epical irony all of nature seems to mock Benjamin and his companion. Its beauties seem to turn inward, ignoring the day dreamer as they never ignored the earnest heroes of Mendele's other works.

The Travels of Benjamin the Third is a bleak picture of a filthy landscape of unrelieved folly, hallucination, and avarice, peopled by visionary runaways, political claques behind the synagogue stove, and scoundrels who sell their fellows into military service. It is Mendele Mocher Seforim at his hardest, a *tour de force* of harsh laughter which will, I suspect, outlive the author's more ambitious and conventional works.

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America as the Future

AMERICA AND COSMIC MAN. By WYNDHAM LEWIS. Doubleday. 247 pp. $2.75.

Reviewed by DENNIS H. WRONG

THIS is a curious book. We have become so accustomed to the picture of America as a cultural wasteland and to attacks on the standardization of American life, that when a writer singles out these widely deplored things for praise, he seems at first sight merely wilfully intransigent or paradoxical.

True, in recent years literary nationalism has become a familiar phenomenon represented by such figures as Dos Passos, MacLeish, and Van Wyck Brooks. But whereas the literary nationalists stick their thumbs into the American past in the hope of pulling out the plum of an authentic native heritage, Lewis is interested only in the future of America, and it is precisely its lack of a national tradition along European lines that pleases him. Far from seeking for values in the past, he devotes over half of his book to excursions into American history in order to emphasize the limited and unpromising beginnings of the nation which was "born out of that very parochial Party-

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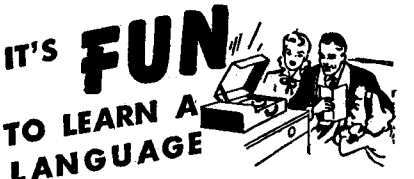
system of British origin" and founded by "bewigged replicas of English polite society."

Lewis sees the violence, irrationality, and rootlessness of American life as positive qualities; qualities not only to be valued in themselves as exuberant proliferations of the human spirit, but also to be welcomed as the birth-pangs of the world society of the future, the society of "cosmic man" (by "cosmic" he means cosmopolitan or internationalist). In effect he turns on its head the negative image which so many European and American intellectuals have of America.

It is surprising and interesting to find this idea of America advanced by a European literary man, an Englishman to boot and a close associate of the expatriates Eliot and Pound. But Wyndham Lewis has often before held original and unfashionable opinions. His name is distasteful to many American intellectuals who vaguely recall that he was considered sympathetic to fascism in the early 30's. I recently read Lewis's book on Hitler which was published in 1930 and which largely gained him this reputation. The book proves only that Lewis, far from sympathizing with the human and political evils of fascism, grossly misunderstood its nature: Lewis saw the Nazis as preservers of the unity and continuity of European culture against the "exotic sense" of "romantic internationalism." A man could scarcely have been more wrong both in his estimate of the Nazis or in his predictions of the movement's future. The Nazis' anti-Semitism he regarded as a sort of crankish aberration super-added to their program, comparable perhaps to the prohibitionism of some of the earlier American socialist parties, but destined to disappear as the movement matured. One feels that his discussion of National Socialism simply provided the occasion for an attack on a variety of literary and philosophical fashions which he deplored. However, this episode hardly recommends him as a sound political analyst, to say the least, and necessarily adds constraint to one's reaction to this latest book.

THE essence of what Lewis says in *America and Cosmic Man* is that since most of us realize that permanent peace, some form of economic collectivism, and an international political community are prerequisites for human survival in the atomic age, we must venerate America and learn from it. For the United States is the nation best exemplifying in embryonic form the world order in which these things will be established. The familiar simile of the melting pot fascinates him: he sees America as "the great big promiscuous grave into which tumble, and there disintegrate, all that was formerly race, class, or nationhood." In a remarkable chapter entitled "The Case Against Roots," he praises rootlessness as a necessary condition of world citizenship, and points out that no one is really rooted in America, "everyone has left his roots over in Poland or Ireland, in Italy or in Russia, so we are all floating around in a rootless Elysium." In a similar manner he views the standardization of life with its wiping out of regional peculiarities and prejudices as the forerunner of the standardization of world culture, an irreversible trend under industrialism.

He notes the drab, dirty sameness of American cities and the "restless, polyglot herds" crowded together in "monstrous manufacturing villages," but where other Europeans have been



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profoundly depressed by this spectacle, Lewis is exhilarated. It gives him "a pleasant disembodied sensation . . ., the sensation of walking on air, of having been delivered of an incubus." He senses the peculiar quality of nakedness which underlies the American's susceptibility to a commercially produced and marketed mass culture, for in the absence of a rooted tradition, it is the shifting panorama of movie stars, popular songs, and best-selling novels that serves as a kind of common language and experience shared by all citizens. The materialism with which Americans are so frequently charged is also a reflection of this nakedness. As Mary McCarthy has pointed out, it is not a genuine craving for material and sensual satisfactions as such. Our desire to possess the new gadgets streaming out of the mammoth factories to the blare of advertising trumpets is not an integral part of an established style of life and code of values. We possess and value these objects *faute de mieux:* they are there around us readily available, and they help for the time being to fill up the vacuum in which we live.

It is its formless energy that makes America a vacuum, not sterility or desiccation, and Lewis is well aware of this. Hence his conviction that Americanism will creatively universalize itself, and his vision of the United States as "a human laboratory for the manufacture of Cosmic Man." The vacuum results from the rejection of the European heritage of wars, nationalism, and racial, religious, and class loyalties, and therefore is to be relished, for in America "you are at last *in the world* instead of just in a nation."

Lewis is not oblivious to the seamy facets of American life. He comments on the treatment accorded the Negro and on the existence of anti-Semitism, which, unlike another recent English writer on America, Geoffrey Gorer, he does not blithely attribute to the Jews' stubborn refusal "to melt in the pot." He jeers at the absurd paraphernalia of the party system, and at our politicians who preach an "official radicalism" while practicing when in office an unimaginative conservatism. "The fact is," he writes, "that Americans in general not only are unaware of their destiny, they actively obstruct the functioning of the 'melting pot.' Culturally this is very serious. There are bottlenecks of archaic prejudice everywhere." Nevertheless Lewis sees value even in these undeniable crudities and absurdities, for America "is the place where all the irrationality is being worked out of the transplanted European system." America is full of incongruities: anachronistic codes and never-ending innovations, insatiable political idealism and party machines founded on violence and graft manage to co-exist. Lewis finds that Americans accept the madly illogical world about them in a spirit of fatalistic amusement, surely an admirable human quality. He fails, however, to give sufficient attention to the professional reformer, another native type spawned out of these conditions.

Lewis's knowledge of American history is probably defective. Although I am not competent to judge it so, Allan Nevins has said as much in a schoolmarmish review of the book. His dips into history are brief and too selective; he is obviously simply seeking ammunition to support his thesis or to set it off by contrast. The electrical quality of Lewis's writing occasionally masks the banality of some of his remarks. His vague enthusiasm for World Government and his flippant repudiation of history as a mere record of barbaric wars, are instances. Now and then he is cute with the irritating whimsicality of a somewhat donnish Englishman. However, his portraits of American statesmen, which include the opposing figures of Jefferson and Hamilton, Teddy Roosevelt and FDR ("The Clubman Caesar"), and Woodrow Wilson ("The Presbyterian Priest"), are brilliantly drawn.

It is a felt rather than a systematically conceived vision of the future which animates his book and enables him to see meanings in the American experience to which American intellectuals themselves have often been blind. After all, if this is the kind of world we are going to be living in, then we had better start learning to appreciate it. That it is a world not lacking in rich and creative human qualities, Wyndham Lewis has tried to show us.

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George Lichtheim is an Israeli journalist now living in England; he writes regularly for the Israeli and British press.

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Jacob Sloan's prose, poetry, and translations are well known to readers of this magazine.

Dennis H. Wrong is now teaching sociology at Princeton University.

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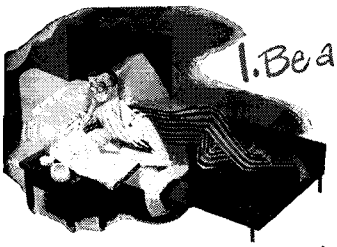

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